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# ESSAYS

ON

ALL THE SCRIPTURAL NAMES AND TITLES

OF

CHRIST;

OR, THE

**Economy of the Gospel Dispensation**

AS EXHIBITED IN THE

PERSON, CHARACTER, AND OFFICES

OF

THE REDEEMER.

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BY THE LATE

REV. WILLIAM GOODE, M. A.

RECTOR OF THE UNITED PARISHES OF ST. ANDREW BY THE WARDBOBE  
AND ST. ANN BLACKFRIARS, &c. &c. &c.

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TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

*A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.*

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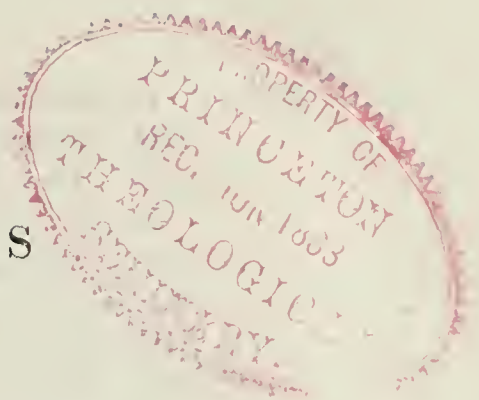
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**E S S A Y S**  
**ON**  
**ALL THE SCRIPTURAL NAMES AND TITLES**  
**OF**  
**CHRIST.**

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*THIRD SERIES.*



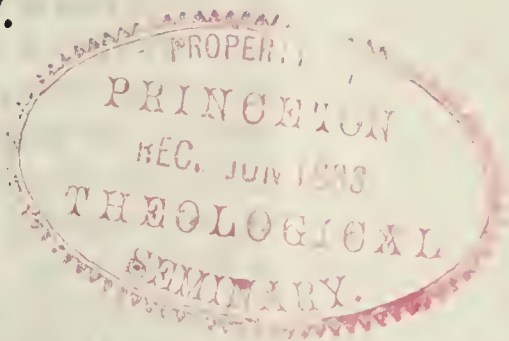
### THIRD SERIES.

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#### ESSAY I.

#### Highest—Most High.

THAT the titles which exclusively belong to JEHOVAH ALEIM, *the God of Israel*, are applied to Christ, the Jewish Messiah, and the Christian's Jesus, might be proved from the analogy of faith, and by plain inferences from the scriptural descriptions of his nature and person. But the prophetic song of Zacharias, at the birth of the Baptist, his forerunner, places it beyond a doubt. Several circumstances had occurred, which must have excited the attention, and raised the expectation, of those who had observed them. Zacharias the priest, while in the discharge of his office, had been struck dumb for his unbelief of the angelic message: the effect was evident to all, but the cause was unknown. And now, at the birth of his son, an event took place beyond the ordinary course of nature; his tongue is again miraculously unloosed, and his mouth opened to celebrate the praises of the Lord, and declare the approach of the *long-expected Messiah*. By Divine direction, the child is to be called John, since he was to be the preparatory messenger to the dispensation of *grace* (as the name signifies); and his birth is declared by the prophetic song, which accompanies it, to be only introductory to a more remarkable birth, of "*Him who was to come.*" *Who, or what, then, is the person, for whose entrance into the world all these preparations are made?*



He is “the Horn of salvation;” “the Day-spring from on high:” but he is still more—“And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the HIGHEST, for thou shalt go before the face of the LORD, to prepare *his* way.” He is, then, JEHOVAH, the HIGHEST! (Luke ii. 76.) These are names which correspond with each other: if JEHOVAH, he must be the HIGHEST; if the HIGHEST, he must be JEHOVAH. This, then, as a title of Christ, implying essential Divinity, is suitable for the introduction of another series.

A variety of circumstances, in which the titles are realized in his mystical and ever-adorable person, will show how rightly he is entitled to bear the name. And before we come to the more express consideration of the subject, we will observe how the title is evidently applied to him in the Scriptures in different ways.

He who is “*GOD over all*,” must be “the MOST HIGH over all the earth.” (Rom. ix. 5.) The children of Israel tempted and provoked the MOST HIGH in the wilderness; but it was *Christ* who was with them there, and tempted and provoked by them. (Psa. lxxviii. 17, 56; compare 1 Cor. x. 9.) The people of GOD are the saints of the MOST HIGH. (Dan. vii. 18.) But they are *his* saints, *his* property, and shall be manifested as such at his coming. (1 Thess. iii. 13.) Angels are the hosts of the MOST HIGH GOD; but they are *his* holy angels. (Matt. xxiv. 31; xiii. 41; xxv. 31.)

But, in the direct consideration of the titles, his *nature* and *perfections*, in which he claims to stand the HIGHEST, first require our attention. The *attributes* of the Supreme are ascribed to him; those to which the ETERNAL JEHOVAH appeals in his Word, as peculiarly demonstrative of his nature and essence, and distinguishing him from all beside, as GOD *alone*. Let us instance in a few.

First, ETERNITY. He existed before the world; yea, before all things. He is “the first, and the last; which is, and which was, and which is to come.” When “he shall fold up the heavens as a vesture, and they shall be



changed, still he remains *the same*, and his years shall not fail." The expression in each of these passages is peculiar, evidently designed to express the unchangeableness of his nature. Though speaking of things past and to come in the past and future tenses, the present tense is used when *his person* is spoken of: to denote the one eternal *now* of his invariable essence. *I am* the first and the last, &c.—“Εγω ειμι το Α και το Ω,” &c. (Rev. i. 8 and 17.) “Thou shalt fold them up,—but thou *art* the same”—συ δε ο αὐτός εἶ. (Heb. i. 12.) He is before all—και αὐτος εστι προ παντων. (Col. i. 17.)—Hence he is the *self-existent*, the *life itself*, the *Prince of life*.

OMNIPRESENCE. While conversing with Nicodemus on earth, he styles himself “*the Son of Man*, which is in heaven”—ὁ ὢν ἐν τῷ σπανῳ. (John iii. 13.) The promise to be with his ministers, even to the end of the world, and in the midst of his worshipping assemblies, scattered, as they are, at the same time, through all the regions of the earth, would be vain and delusive, yea, impossible, did he not possess these Divine perfections. Hence the Apostle charges Timothy, not only as *before*, and in the sight of, God, but also, *Jesus Christ*. (1 Tim. vi. 13 ; and 2 Tim. iv. 1.)

Necessarily connected with this is

OMNISCIENCE. While tabernacling in human nature, “he needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man.” (John ii. 23.) Hence we find him frequently anticipating the inquiries of those around him, and answering, not their words, but their thoughts, which his infinite wisdom had discerned. He claims, therefore, this prerogative of the Divine nature: “All the churches shall know, that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts.” (Rev. ii. 23.) He is, consequently, styled, “the *only wise* God and Saviour.” (Jude, ver. 25.)

OMNIPOTENCE. In that vision of Jesus Christ, which opens the wonderful series of prophecy in the Book of Revelations, and which can be applied to none other, he styles himself *the ALMIGHTY*. (Rev. i. 8.) Who else

could “uphold all things by the word of his power?”—(Compare Heb. i. 3; Col. i. 17.) Who else could “be able, by his mighty power, to subdue all things to himself?” (Phil. iii. 21.)—It would be easy to multiply passages of a similar kind, or to follow the same series of proofs through all the attributes of the Divine nature; but He to whom these perfections belong must evidently and necessarily possess all others.

*All the moral excellencies and perfections of GODHEAD* are, therefore, attributed to, and claimed by him. Essential *righteousness, holiness, goodness, grace*, are his; or, rather, *he is* them. They are his essence; he is their perfection. “He is the *Holy One* and the *Just*.” (Acts iii. 14.) “Ye have tasted (says the Apostle Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 3) that the Lord is *gracious*.” The testimony of this is, indeed, scattered throughout the whole word of God; all concurs to exalt our Jesus, and to show that he, who, by voluntary condescension, was the *lowest* of the sons of men, in his original nature and essential perfections, bears by right the glory of the HIGHEST.

He, then, must be the *self-existent* JEHOVAH, *true and very* GOD; as is implied in the very name.

The term MOST HIGH is appropriate to the Divine Nature; it is a character and a name which can only belong to Him who is “GOD *over all* :” to apply it to any other would not only be blasphemy, but absurdity. By what figure of speech can any one be called, absolutely and by way of eminence, the HIGHEST, who is only a *creature*? who is not over all worlds, over all angels, over all things? Who can be higher than the highest? Yet, between JEHOVAH and creatures exalted to the highest step of dignity and perfection a created nature is capable of, there remains the vast distance between infinite and finite. “The Higher than the highest regards them” as his dependent creatures, “and there be higher than they.” (Eccl. v. 8.) Hence He who, in the prophetic song of Zacharias, is called the HIGHEST, in the parallel prophecy of Isaiah is styled “JEHOVAH, our GOD.” (Isa. xl. 3.)



What testimony can we wish for more? What testimony can we conceive stronger, in proof of the Divine glories and Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ? What but a voluntary blindness can conceal a truth which appears written as with a sun-beam in the pages of revelation? The *Saviour* is the "MIGHTY GOD."

The *works* attributed to Jesus confirm his right to bear this appropriate title of JEHOVAH. The most exalted of all works, and that which implies the utmost exertions of Divine power, is, the work of *creation*. It is upon this that the God of Israel asserts his exclusive Godhead; his title to the worship, the adoration, the confidence of his people: "The Lord is the true God; he is the living God, and an everlasting King: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods which have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power; he hath established the world by his wisdom; and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion." (Jer. x. 10—12, &c.) Again: "The Portion of Jacob is not like them, for he is the *Former* of all things, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the LORD of HOSTS is his name" (ver. 16; compare Isa. xl. 25—31). This conclusion is most just: that which is created must be dependent upon its Creator, and therefore not the proper object of Divine worship. But He who hath created all things must himself be the *uncreated* ESSENCE, or, JEHOVAH. This is more clear and self-evident, when we consider the nature of creation, which is not a mere formation of pre-existent matter into order and beauty, but an absolute production—the calling out of *nothing* into *existence*; a work with which we have no parallel in the works of men, and which is the discovery of revelation alone; the object of implicit faith. Hebrews xi. 3: "*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God.*" By this work of Divine power he becomes, and claims a right to be acknowledged as, the "MOST HIGH *over all the earth.*"

But the same proof attaches itself to the person of Jesus, since the *same work is plainly and absolutely ascribed to him*. In the language of the Old Testament: “By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath [or Spirit] of his mouth.” (Psa. xxxiii. 6.) That by this term is to be understood the essential WORD of JEHOVAH, is plain, by the declaration of the Evangelist, who, when speaking of him, under that very character or name, ascribes to him the creation of all things: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God: the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” (John i. 1—3.) The Apostle speaks the same truth (Col. i. 16) in language most clear and comprehensive: “For by him were *all things created*, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created *by him and for him*.” (Compare Eph. iii. 9; Heb i. 3, 10.) In the latter passages God is said to have “created all things *by Jesus Christ*.” He is not, however, to be considered here as a mere instrument, as is evident from the whole tenor of revelation; but as One united in the Essence of Godhead, and *therefore in all its acts and glories*.

And as creation is his work, so *life*, which is exclusively the operation of God, and which no created being can ever communicate to another, *is also his gift*. “In him was life.” (John i. 4.) He calls himself “*the resurrection*,” and, “*the life*.” (John xi. 25.) He is also acknowledged as the *Prince of life*. (Acts iii. 15.) This he claims, when asserting that he had power over his own life, which no created being could have; but “he had power to lay it down, and power to take it again.” (John x. 18.) His resurrection was the proof of this, which is ascribed not only to the Father, and the power of the Holy Ghost, but to his own.

He who is the Creator is also the *Upholder* and *Preserver*: “Upholding all things by the word of his power.”



(Heb. i. 3.) And, "By him all things consist," or retain their relative places together, in the great system of the universe; preserving that beautiful order in which he formed them, and which he commands them to maintain. (Col. i. 17.) And, to show that the power of life is his, when universal nature shall be dissolved, he shall restore it again in that new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. He shall recal the sleeping dust; raise and reform the mouldering and long-corrupted body; and again command life to re-animate the frame. "They that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John v. 28, 29.)

But, while *creation, preservation, and restoration*, declare Him the HIGHEST; the work of *redemption* confirms his right, and increases the proofs of his *supreme dignity and glory*. Here he stands alone, unrivalled in his undertaking, in his operations, in his dignity and merit, and in the effects and benefits of his salvation. His submission and his triumph—his warfare and his victory—all his acts and sufferings in the great mystery of redemption, are peculiarly his own, without a parallel, and without the possibility of a parallel, in heaven or in earth. None but he could have undertaken or have accomplished the work. The enduring of Divine wrath, the curse of sin, the satisfying of Divine justice, the harmonizing of all Divine perfections, in the salvation of condemned sinners; the triumph over Satan, the great enemy of mankind, by the cross, and the consequent deliverance from the wrath to come; and the gift of eternal life and glory; are works of the highest power, dignity, and merit, alone to be accomplished by Him, whose power and glory is *in the highest*. The consideration of these subjects, with that infinite variety of Divine operations which is connected with them, would, indeed, enlarge our views, and present to us the character of the Redeemer in the most glorious light; but this would lead us into too wide a field of observation: it is



sufficient to remark, that He who is essentially the Highest in his Divine nature, must appear as such in the ultimate result of all his undertakings. Ever since, therefore, he was set up from everlasting in his mediatorial character, it has been the design of the Father to glorify his Son Jesus, to put upon him the highest honour, and to exalt him, as Mediator, to the highest place of dignity.

Hence, notwithstanding his necessary humiliation, he now holds, in his mediatorial character, the *highest state of elevation*—"that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." Here we are to contemplate him in the union of his Divine and human nature; in a dignity, which was not originally his, as such, but, the effect of his finished work, and of the fulfilment of all the terms of his mediation. That glory of supreme dominion and worship which he had with the Father before the world was, must, in this view, become a gift, and cannot be enjoyed in the person of Immanuel, but as the grant of the Father. Hence that prayer of the humble Jesus, "I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do: and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with that glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John xvii. 4, 5.) This union of the human nature in Divine honours, in consequence of its union with a Person in Godhead (for we worship the complete Saviour, though his Godhead only is the proper object of worship), is one part of that great mystery of godliness which attaches itself to the person, work, and office of the *Mediator*. That nature in which he humbled himself, and became of no reputation, participates his glory, as the wife, whatever may have been her station before, participates the honour of him to whom she is united. In that nature in which he once appeared as a man of sorrow, in which he endured our sin and grief, which was bathed with the bloody sweat in Gethsemane, and pierced with nails, and suspended on the cross upon Calvary; in that nature he is exalted to the highest glory, and seated on the throne of heaven, as Mediator. His humiliation was the way to his exaltation;

the performance of the one, seemed the enjoyment of the other, according to the covenant engagements between the eternal Three. We are told, therefore, that "God hath set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities and powers, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." (Eph. i. 20, 21.) The ground of this is expressly declared to be his humiliation: "he became obedient to death, even the death of the cross; *wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that, at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." (Phil. ii. 8, 9, 10.) This distinction between the Divine glories of Jesus, as in the Godhead, and those which belong to him in the person of Immanuel, as Mediator, is necessary to be observed, if we would have clear views of his person and character. This only can account for the different manner in which those glories are represented in Scripture; but this clears away every difficulty, and harmonizes the whole: in the one view we behold his glories, as essential, underived, and independent; in the other, the same glories are communicated to and received by him for the purposes of mediation and salvation.

What an exalted, and at the same time what a consoling, animating impression do these views leave upon the mind of the all-sufficient and complete salvation of Jesus! His salvation must be salvation in *the highest*—a work worthy of such a person, and attended with such glory to himself, must be infinitely excellent. Such, indeed, was the undertaking and work of redemption, suited to his dignity and glory, and beyond the power of any intelligence beside. Creation and redemption are appealed to as the works of God, but both of these are ascribed to Christ; the latter is represented as equally requiring a Divine power as the former, and as being actually the work of Jehovah. "Thy Redeemer is strong; Jehovah,



God of Hosts, is his name.” (Jer. l. 34.) But if he only could accomplish the undertaking, he has completed it: he could say, “Father, *I have finished* the work which thou gavest me to do.” We are directed, therefore, by the Prophets, to this song of praise, in honour of the all-perfect Redeemer: “Sing, O ye heavens, for *the Lord hath done it!* shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein; for *the Lord hath redeemed* Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.” (Isa. xlv. 23.) The triumphant Conqueror, therefore, displays his achievements, and proclaims their result in everlasting victory, for the benefit and consolation of his people. He trod the winepress alone, and stained his raiment with the blood of his enemies: when he looked, and there was none to help, he placed himself in their stead; then his arm brought salvation, and his zeal upheld him; for the day of vengeance was in his heart, and the year of his redeemed was come. Arrayed in the bloody dress of his conflict, and in the glorious trophies of his victory, he proclaims himself “*mighty to save!*” (See Isa. lxiii. 1—6.) Now, then, thou miserable, fearful, but penitent sinner, behold, the purchase of redemption is complete—the debt of sin is paid—the ransom is given and accepted—the punishment and the curse is endured—justice is satisfied—thy sins are atoned for—and mercy waits to welcome thy return and bless thy soul with salvation. We say to thee, “the warfare is accomplished” in the person of Jesus; “iniquity is pardoned,” because the sacrifice for iniquity is accepted; and the Lord will bestow the “double,” the abundant blessings of his grace, which abound beyond all thy sins. (See Isa. xl. 2, with Lowth’s Commentary.) Faith may welcome the all-sufficient ransom, and trust the faithful promise; for, “he that believeth shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.” If he condescended to the deepest abasement, to the lowest contempt, to the bitterest agonies of soul, to the desertion of his heavenly Father, and the curse of sin, it was in order to complete the most glorious salvation. To that *finished*

work of the Saviour nothing can be added in point of merit or efficacy: faith receives it as God gives it, complete and all-sufficient, and glorifies him by believing that in him, by covenant appointment, all fulness dwells.

But, in order to accomplish his designs of grace, and the purposes of his salvation, not only does he possess the *highest personal glory*, but is exalted into the exercise of the *highest power and authority*. "We see Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." (Heb. ii. 9.) "He bears upon his vesture and upon his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS:" the Supreme Ruler over all subordinate principalities and powers. (Rev. xix. 16.) "For God hath put all things in subjection under his feet." The pure spirits above are at his command, inferior to him, as they are his "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. i. 14.) Devils and fallen spirits are equally under his dominion; witness their submission to him, even in the condescension of his human nature. He had even then power to dislodge them from their assumed possessions of the human frame, and so to restrain their power, that, by his permission alone, they enter into a herd of swine. His power, also, to torment them in his own appointed time is acknowledged and established by their own confession; yea, all nature and providence are in his hands, under his control, and at his direction. In his humiliation, at his command the elements ceased to rage, Nature suspended or reversed its usual order and its laws, diseases yielded to his voice, and the dead heard and lived: and now he is the "Head over all things to his church." This sovereign authority no enemy can control, no power subvert. He who died upon the cross commands and rules the universe. "When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, &c. being made so much better than the angels, as he hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they." Angels are commanded to worship him; they are his ministers, while



“to the Son He saith, Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever,” &c.

Well, then, may such a Saviour, exalted as the HIGHEST upon the throne of glory, possess the most assured faith, the highest confidence of all his people upon earth, in all their concerns of body and of soul. For the *miserable sinner*, ready to perish, but returning to the throne of grace in penitent supplication, he possesses the *highest mercy*: the heavens are not so high above the earth, as his thoughts of mercy are above our thoughts, and his ways above our ways. For the guilty, unrighteous, and *condemned*, he possesses the *highest merit*, arising from his own infinite atonement and everlasting righteousness; an atonement which takes away all sin—a righteousness “revealed from faith to faith,” and “*imputed to them which believe*,” and which, thus received, “justifies from all things.” Hence the gracious declaration, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.” (Isa. xliv. 22.)

The omniscience, the omnipresence, the omnipotence, the eternity of the Divine Nature, uniting themselves in the government of the Mediator, secure the safety of his believing people. His wisdom in the *highest* meets and disperses all our difficulties and perplexities—his almighty power restrains or overcomes our enemies—his eternal unchangeableness gives infallibility to our hopes. He who by his death has conquered death, and him that had the power of death, has said, “I give unto them [my sheep] eternal life, and they shall never perish,” &c. (John x. 28.) From the lowest abasement of sin, from the deepest abyss of guilt he can save, can justify, can cleanse, can exalt to the highest glory. Believer, thou hast a proof of this his power. Who is it that has changed thy heart, subdued thy former domineering lusts, turned thee from darkness to light, renewed thy rebellious dispositions, so as to make thee delight in obedience to his will, and formed thee for spiritual enjoyments and pleasures, the foretastes of the

heavenly world? These delights thy nature was a stranger to; but they now exalt thy soul, and point thee to the realms above for the satisfying of those ardent desires which now animate thy soul with holy affections. This is the work of Jesus, the pledge of his complete salvation. Thus the Apostle reasons (Eph. iii. 20): “He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, *according to the power that worketh in us.*” Let the Apostle show thee the security of thy faith in that song of triumph which he has put into the mouth of believers in Jesus: “I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, &c. &c. shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. viii. 38, 39.)

This is the *first* and *highest honour* we can give to this exalted Saviour—when faith is strong, realizing the virtue of his atoning blood, with peace of conscience—of his righteousness, with assured confidence of acceptance—relying upon the power of his arm, and the grace of his Spirit, to lead us on to victory—believing his unchanging promise, and then trusting all our concerns with patience and satisfaction into his hands. And it is the highest dishonour to the exalted Redeemer to doubt the sufficiency of his dying love and immaculate righteousness: but sweet is the peace which then possesses the heart, arising from a consciousness of the all-sufficiency of his grace; all our anxious fears are removed by the confidence of his covenant love, his infinite wisdom, and his constant care, directed, according to his faithful promises, on the behalf of all who love and trust in him. Here all the consolation, and all the benefit, is ours, all the grace and all the glory must be his!

But, together with the highest confidence of faith, let this *highest Saviour* possess also

The warmest, the *highest love* of our hearts. To his believing people, thus beholding his *essential* and *mediatorial* glories, he is “the Chief among ten thousand, and altogether Lovely;” he is eminently “the Beloved.”



They delight to meditate on, and range through, all the supreme and unrivalled excellencies of his character, the wonders of his salvation, and the blessings which are treasured up in him. But they know that in these there is “an height, a depth, a length, and breadth which passeth all understanding.” In him is the highest blessedness, from him are the highest blessings, and to him is due supreme and undivided love.

To him also belongs the *highest adoration of praise*. It has been the character of his people from the beginning—it is the very mean of their salvation, “they call upon the name of the Lord” (see Gen. iv. 26; Rom. x. 13); that is, they not only feel, but publicly acknowledge, their entire and sole dependence upon him—their confidence in his grace to pardon all their sin—their confidence in his power to give all they want, in his all-sufficiency and faithfulness to supply all their renewed desires, and to satisfy their immortal souls for ever. “With the mouth, therefore, they make confession of him to their salvation.” This is the employment of his church below: they all love the Lord Jesus supremely, trust him above all, and give him the praise of all; they ascribe to him “*glory in the highest*, as *One* in the *undivided essence* of the SUPREME ETERNAL, and as *Mediator-IMMANUEL*, GOD-man, the All in all in the work of redemption, in the carrying on and perfecting salvation; they fill their songs of praise with the glory of his name, and shout, “Hosanna in the *highest*!” and yet, after all, they feel and acknowledge that he is highly exalted “above all their blessing and praise.” This was the apostolic spirit. “To him be glory, for ever and ever;” and every member of his church will, with heart and voice, say, *Amen*. (Heb. xiii. 21; 2 Pet. iii. 18.) The church on earth, in doing this, is only concurring and joining in concert with the church above: there Jesus has the *highest* glory and praise. “Let all the angels of God worship him,” is the command of God—a command which meets with their ready obedience, and has directed and influenced their unceasing and exalted adorations. There he is united



with the Father in the same song of praise, by that innumerable multitude which stand before the throne and before the Lamb, crying with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." (See Rev. vii. 9—12.) The character of the MOST HIGH must surely be properly applied to him, who bears such honours upon the throne. When faith enters the heavenly gates, and takes a view of those adoring hosts, it never scruples to unite with believers on earth in the same delightful song:

"Hosanna, in the highest strains  
The church on earth can raise :  
The highest heav'ns, in which he dwells,  
Shall give him nobler praise."

But the highest honour and praise which we can render to the Redeemer, are,

The *highest praises* of our lives. Thus he shall be praised, not only *by*, but *in*, his people. The Apostle has, in a most striking manner, expressed this most important view, in his prayer for, and his exhortation to, the Thessalonians: "We pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of his calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. i. 11, 12.) Let our lives, then, in their whole tenour and pursuit, be arranged and ordered so as evidently to design his glory, that "we may walk worthy of God unto all well-pleasing." Let the love of Christ constrain, as his glories claim, our loving, cheerful obedience; our most earnest endeavours to magnify his grace, and to promote his interests and honour. If this love be discerned by faith, if it be enjoyed in its sweetness and felt in its extent, these are effects which will necessarily follow: and, in proportion as his grace is experienced, it will teach effectually the lesson for which it was designed, "to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live righteously, soberly, and godly," &c.

What else, O thou MOST HIGH! thou who, as the Saviour of thy people, art exalted in the highest, dost thou claim at our hands? Behold thy willing servants! Claim what thou wilt; Faith replies, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth:" Lord, "here am I;" I am thine, completely thine, thine by every obligation, thine by affection and choice: if I live, let me live unto the Lord; if I die, let me die unto the Lord; whether living or dying, I am the Lord's.—Oh that professing Christians felt more of this sublime and noble spirit; the true spirit of genuine Christianity, so gloriously illustrated in the Apostle of the Gentiles; which so generally and eminently actuated the primitive disciples; which so distinguishingly marked their character, and enabled them to triumph in the midst of sufferings and varied scenes of death for the sake of their Divine Master. Alas! our views of his person, his work, his characters and offices, his grace and love, are too low and limited—far below and within the astonishing descriptions of unerring truth in the sacred records—and therefore our hearts are too little influenced and governed by his love. Let us meditate more upon that word where his glory is revealed; and pray for the teaching of that Spirit, whose office it is to glorify Him thereby; and then, while faith realizes his supreme excellencies for the peace of the conscience, the quietness of the heart, and the elevation of our eternal hopes, his praise will flow from a believing heart, through thankful lips, and be exalted to the *highest*, in a life of cheerful holiness and universal obedience. Soon shall his salvation, thus begun in faith, be enjoyed in its consummation with him, in the *highest glory*; soon shall he bring all his church around that throne upon which he is exalted; soon shall the fulness of joy flow from his presence to the surrounding multitudes of his redeemed, in those glories which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived. Oh that we may then join that heavenly song, *Worthy is the Lamb to receive glory in the highest!* Soon shall the whole body of the church, now militant below, unite with the church

triumphant, themselves then exalted amongst them, and with all the hosts of heaven, in celebrating the high praises of our Jesus, as *One* in the ETERNAL JEHOVAH, and in his mediatorial Person the HIGHEST in the (earthly and) heavenly world!

Blessed Jesus! thy church on earth, in faith, anticipates the song; in their feeble strains they offer thee the same praises now: thus, from generation to generation, may thy glory be perpetuated in the *highest*, till they all unite in one general chorus, and pronounce (in the loudest acclamations, and in the highest raptures of everlasting wonder, and with one undivided sentiment of admiration) the universal *Amen!*



## ESSAY II.

## Angel.

THE application of this title to the Redeemer arises from the nature of the covenant of grace, and is properly connected with the character which he sustains therein. The term *Angel* is not necessarily, nor is it generally, in the Scriptures, applied to a distinct order of spiritual beings; though this idea so unites itself with the term in our minds, and so immediately occurs to us upon the mention of it, that we find a great difficulty in separating them. Its literal and most common acceptation in the Scriptures is that of a *messenger*, or *agent*, whether spiritual or corporeal, visible or invisible, intelligent or unintelligent; one *sent* to perform a work, or to bear a message.

Man, as a sinner, could have no intercourse with the just and holy God, till he was pleased to manifest himself as JEHOVAH the ALLEIM—*One Jehovah in Three covenanting Persons*, according to the counsels of redemption. To restore the intercourse, a Mediator also was necessary: one who was able to come near and approach to God, and to stand between God and us; one who should also bear the nature of his brethren; and thus, standing upon equal terms with both parties, should be able to mediate between God and man: one who must, therefore, be himself both God and man. Behold, then, the great mystery of redeeming love! The Second Person in the ever-blessed Triune Deity engages in this wondrous work; again unites the divided parties; restores and carries on, in his own person, the delightful intercourse between offending creatures and an offended, but now reconciled, God: and, in

this economical character, and especially as assuming the nature of his fallen brethren to accomplish it, is considered as the covenant *Messenger*, the *Sent* of God; and therefore styled *the Angel*, the *Angel of the Covenant*.

This name may appear, at first sight, so different from that which last engaged our attention, as to imply a direct contradiction; but will be evidently far otherwise when properly understood. In order to distinguish him, who eminently bears this title, from all created intelligences or created agents, other terms are frequently added to the name, which raise him infinitely above them. Thus he is called, by way of pre-eminence, the *Angel of Jehovah*; or, more properly (as we shall see in many instances), the *Angel Jehovah*; as being *One* in the Divine Essence. He is also styled the *Angel of God*, or, the *Angel Aleim*; as being that Person in the ever-blessed Trinity who undertook this covenant office. Again: "The Angel of *his* (i. e. Jehovah's) *presence*," or, of the *faces*, or *persons*, in Jehovah. The scriptural term *the presence*, or, פָּנֵי *faces*, of God, is applied to a Person in the Godhead; that very Person who was promised to go before the Israelites through the wilderness, as their Leader and Defender. (See Exod. xxxiii. 14; compare Acts vii. 38, and Isa. lxiii. 9.) Again: he is called the *Angel of the Covenant*; as the Divine Agent, who, in the eternal purposes, undertook to perform all its stipulations; to receive all its blessings, and dispense them to his people. These views sufficiently distinguish him from all created angels.

Before his incarnation, indeed, and in conducting his ancient church, he assumed frequently what we conceive to have been an angelic appearance—or, rather, a dignified human form, the emblem, or anticipation, of his future incarnation. But these appearances, instead of manifesting any inferiority, were generally attended with the strongest tokens of Divinity: this dignified form of human nature was, either at first, or during his appearance, attended with some display and irradiation of glory; or he spoke or acted in such a manner as to mark the

presence of some superior Being. The language also, and the conduct, of his people on such occasions, as recorded in the Scriptures, plainly discover the view which they entertained of the person and character of him before whom they stood, forming the most explicit acknowledgments of his Godhead.

It will be proper, first, to select and notice some of these *angelic appearances*, that we may understand the scriptural representations of the subject, and the sentiments of the ancient church.

The first appearance of this kind, which the Scriptures record, is that to Hagar, when she was driven from the house of her mistress: And “the *Angel of the Lord* found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness.” Who this Angel was there can be no doubt, from the manner in which he speaks: and, by the acknowledgments which immediately follow, we discern what were her views of the Person which she had seen. He assumes the power of creation and providence; she acknowledges him as the Lord God. “I,” says he, “will multiply thy seed exceedingly,” &c.; “and she called the name of JEHOVAH that spake unto her, Thou GOD seest me.” (Gen. xvi. 7—14.) In a future appearance of the same kind, to the same person, GOD, and the *Angel of God*, are evidently spoken of as the same: Then “God heard the voice of the lad;” “and the *Angel of God* called unto Hagar, and said,” &c. (Gen. xxi. 17, 18.)

In the xviii<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis, we have a most peculiar and interesting account of the appearance of the Lord to Abraham: “And the Lord (JEHOVAH) appeared to him in the plains of Mamre; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo! three men stood by him.” The *Three Men* are here evidently called the Appearance of Jehovah, in representation of the Triune Persons in the Godhead. One of them is eminently called Jehovah, by way of distinction; who addressed himself to Abraham in the promise of a son; and before whom Abraham stood to plead, when the others passed on towards Sodom. This dignity be-



longed to the Father, not from any superiority in Godhead, but according to the order of the covenant offices and undertaking. In the beginning of the next chapter (ver. 1) we find but *two*, called *Angels*, who entered into Sodom; but who afterwards are called *men* (ver. 5 and 10). But it seems, that the dignity of their appearance was such as to claim from Lot marks of respect far beyond the common acts of civility: "He rose up to meet them, and bowed himself with his face towards the ground." (ver. 1.) And, in the denunciation of the destruction of the city, they declare, "We will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the Lord, and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it." To be *sent*, is the distinguishing character of the *Second* and *Third* Persons in the economy of the covenant. In the execution of the vengeance, therefore, it is said, "Then *the Lord (Jehovah)* rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire *from the Lord (Jehovah)* out of heaven." (ver. 24.) There is such a peculiarity in the different parts of this description, that upon any other view of the subject it must be altogether unintelligible\*.

When the *Angel of Jehovah* appeared again to Abraham, to prevent the slaughter of his son, he speaks thus: "Now *I* know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from *me*." From whom was it that he had not withheld his son, but from יהוה אלהים, GOD the Lord? (Gen. xxii. 12; compare ver. 15, 16.)

This term is never used in the account of God's appearances to Isaac: but, when Jacob is about to return from the bondage of Laban into his own country, the term is again introduced, in the reason which he gives for his de-

\* It appears to us, that no other consistent interpretation of the passage can be given. If any one should be inclined to condemn it as fanciful, let them endeavour to reconcile its different parts upon any other interpretation: let them also remember, that the same charge falls upon the reformers and fathers of the English Church. They have chosen this chapter as the Lesson for Trinity Sunday, and thus direct us to consider it in this light; for in what other light could it have any relation to the subject of that day's contemplation?

parture : “ The *Angel of God* spake unto me in a dream, and he said, I am the *God of Bethel*,” &c. (Gen. xxxi. 11—13.) The Angel of the Lord is here said to be the same as appeared to him at Bethel. There he had the vision of the ladder : over this, Jehovah stood, and proclaimed himself the Lord God of Abraham and of Isaac : there he renewed to him the covenant promise which he had made unto his fathers. Deeply affected with the sacred vision, he exclaims, “ Surely the Lord (JEHOVAH) is in this place ;” “ this is none other than the house of God ” (the ALEIM). But the Angel now appearing to him, declares that he is the very same ! (Gen. xxviii. 13—17 ; compare xxxii. 24—30.)

In the closing scene of his life, when blessing the sons of Joseph, he speaks of the God of Abraham and Isaac, the God which fed him all his life long, and the Angel who redeemed him from all evil, as the same ; to whose care he commits them, as to his one covenant God. (ch. xlviii. 15, 16.) The Prophet Hosea, when speaking of the circumstance which occurred at Mahanaim, where he wrestled with the angel and prevailed, has expressly declared the truth of this. (Hosea xii. 4, 5) : “ He had power over the Angel, and prevailed : he wept and made supplication unto him : he found him in Bethel, and there HE spake with us : even the Lord God of hosts, the Lord (JEHOVAH) is his memorial.”

Is it not plain, beyond a doubt, from these passages, that the terms, the Lord God, the Angel of Jehovah, and the Angel of God, are used indiscriminately for the same glorious Being ; that in one sense they are synonymous, and in another sense are distinct ; alluding to Him who is the same in his Divine nature and essence, but distinct in personality, and in economical characters and offices ?—After this it will be useless to multiply passages to the same import ; but, as many of the passages in which the title afterwards occurs will enable us to fix its application most decidedly to the person of Christ the Messiah, it may be proper to notice a few of them.

The glorious Being who appeared to Moses in the burning bush ; before whom Moses hid his face ; who proclaimed himself the “ I AM THAT I AM,” could be none other than the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is, however, expressly called the Angel of the Lord, *Exod. iii. 2—6, 14.* It was *He*, the very same, who brought the Israelites out of Egypt ; who spake to them in Sinai ; who inhabited the pillar of fire and of cloud ; who led them through the wilderness, and placed them safely in the promised inheritance : but he is indiscriminately called the Lord God, the Angel, the Angel of God, the Angel of the Lord. (*Judges ii. 1—3 ; comp. Acts vii. 35, 38\*.*)

Our Lord, in his discourse with the Jews, in a conversation in which it was most important not to have given room for such a mistaken apprehension of his words, expressly applies to himself the term used by the God of Israel at the bush. “ Before Abraham was,” says he, “ I AM.” (*John viii. 58.*) And the Apostle evidently considers that “ leading Angel ” to be the Lord Christ, when he speaks of their “ tempting Christ in the wilderness.” (*1 Cor. x. 9.*) Again, when explaining the directions he had received by a Divine vision for the preservation of his shipwrecked company, he plainly uses the same title of the Redeemer. “ The *Angel of God*,

\* In *Exod. xxxiii. 1—3*, the Israelites seem to have mistaken the design of God ; or, as the passage implies a denunciation, and the term Angel is in that place indefinite, without the addition of *mine* Angel, or, the *Angel of the Lord*, &c., it might be intended to convey to them the threat of a withdrawment of his more immediate personal interposition, to alarm their fears and excite their repentance. In the same chapter, however, their fears are relieved, or their mistaken apprehensions rectified, by his being called *the presence of JEHOVAH* ; or, as by the Prophet, “ The Angel of his presence : ” and, in another place, to distinguish him from all created angels, he is called “ *the Angel in whom is the name* ” (i. e. the nature, perfections, and glory) “ *of JEHOVAH.* ” The general promise, except in that one place, is intended as a blessing, and not as a curse ; not implying any intimation of the withdrawment, but of the continuance, of the Divine guidance and protection. (*Exod. xxiii. 20—23 ; compare Deut. vii. 21, 22.*)



whose I am, and whom I serve, stood by me this night, saying, Fear not, Paul," &c. &c. (Acts xxvii. 23.) The Apostle was the servant of Christ, and Christ is the Angel of the Lord, the Angel of the Covenant, and the great I AM.

The same glorious Person appeared to Joshua in the form of a man, with his sword drawn in his hand, assuming the character of the "Captain of the Lord's host;" but by a command similar to that which was given to Moses, and for the same reason—viz. the holiness of the place, as consecrated by his appearance—he is manifested to be the same who before appeared to Moses in the burning bush: "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground," &c. (Josh. v. 13—15.)

Again; the same *Angel of the Lord* appears to the rebellious Israelites at Bochim, and declares, "*I* made you to go out of Egypt, and have brought you into the land which *I* swear unto your fathers; and *I* said, *I* will never break *my* covenant with you," &c.; "but ye have not obeyed *my* voice," &c.; "wherefore *I* said, *I* will not drive them out," &c. Who can properly use such language but the God of Israel, who is, nevertheless, here styled the Angel of the Lord? (Judges ii. 1—3.)

We have a similar manifestation afterwards to Gideon (Judges vi. 11—24), who is made to understand, in the end, his true character; to acknowledge him as such, and erect an altar for his worship: "The Angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee" (ver. 12): "and the Lord (Jehovah) looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might," &c. (ver. 14.) The Angel of the Lord, and Jehovah himself, are here spoken of repeatedly as the same. But when this wonderful Person had wrought wonderfully (as he afterwards did before Manoah and his wife), in consuming the flesh and the unleavened cakes which were presented before him as an offering; then his true character was fully manifested, and we are told, that Gideon perceived that he was an, or the, *Angel of the Lord*. But the words of the

original are מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה\* הוּא, *the Angel JEHOVAH himself*. Before this, he seems to have misunderstood his true character; but that he now perceived him to be the *Lord God* is evident, for he immediately exclaims (ver. 22), “Alas! O Lord God!” (*Adonai JEHOVAH*), and builds an altar unto him as JEHOVAH (ver. 24).

But one of the most remarkable appearances is that to Manoah and his wife (Judges xiii. 1—23), announcing the birth of Sampson. This appearance was attended with circumstances very similar to those before recorded in the history of Gideon. A sacrifice was commanded, and miraculously consumed, while the Angel ascended in the rising smoke, emblematical of the dying love and rising power of the expected Messiah (ver. 19, 20). This we shall immediately notice more fully; only at present observing what their views were, and of course those of the Jewish nation, of Him who frequently appeared to them in this manner. At first they knew not that it was *the Angel of Jehovah* (ver. 16). The terms are the same as in the former appearance; מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה הוּא, *the Angel JEHOVAH himself*. But as soon as he knew this, he immediately acknowledges him as GOD: “We have seen GOD” (ver. 22);—to which she adds the confession of him as JEHOVAH (ver. 23). But that which constitutes the peculiarity of this account is, the name which he assumes (פֶּלֶא), which we translate “secret,” but which is rightly translated in the margin “*wonderful*,” or, “*the wonderful One*.” It is the same which is, given to the promised Messiah in that beautiful prophecy of his incarnation, Isa. ix. 6: “his name shall be called פֶּלֶא, the wonderful One.” The term occurs only in these two places, and has, no doubt, in both, a reference to the same Divine Person, the same condescending Saviour; and that Person, it is evident from this passage, is the same as the Angel of the Lord which appeared so frequently to his ancient people.

May we not, then, conclude, that this is the Angel of

\* The term הוּא is emphatic, and is often used as a name of Jehovah, denoting his eternity and immutability.—See Essay on the title Unchangeable, Series XII. Essay IX.

Jehovah, spoken of by the Psalmist (Psa. xxxiv. 7), “who encampeth around his chosen people for their defence?” May we not suppose that this is the same, the very Angel, who appeared to Joshua the high-priest, at the building of the second temple; and who protested, no doubt in his own person, “Thus saith the *Lord of hosts*, If thou wilt walk in *my* ways, &c. then thou shalt judge my house?” (Zech. iii. 6, 7.) In this manner he conducted the concerns of his ancient people. But, when the period of the prophetic dispensation was about to close, then we find it in a direct manner applied to the expected Redeemer: “The Lord whom ye *seek* shall suddenly come to his temple, even the *Messenger*” (the term is the same as is constantly rendered *Angel*) “of the *Covenant*, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.” (Mal. iii. 1.)

Here, then, we have the fullest scriptural evidence who that Person is who appeared under this character in the ancient times of the church: that he is in the Essence of JEHOVAH, One in the GODHEAD, the covenant ALEIM of his people; but, according to his engagement in the covenant of redemption, bearing the office of one *sent*, and therefore appearing in *this character*, the *Angel*: and that he is the very same who was expected to appear, and who did appear, as the promised Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel, and in whom was their great delight. He is, therefore, the same as *Jesus our Saviour*. His supernatural appearances were, indeed, confined to the dispensation which was in force before he was actually made flesh and dwelt among us: they were emblematical of that circumstance, and consequently were no longer necessary when, “as manifested in the flesh,” he actually bore the human nature. Still, however, the same Person bears the same office: and the term is therefore again resumed in the Book of the Revelations, and applied to him. There he is represented as the great Agent, conducting all the affairs of the world, and more directly concerned in the management of his church. Still, then, he is the same to his



Gospel church and to us, though invisible. His care and government are represented by various, the most beautiful and expressive, allusions in the New-Testament Scriptures; and the consideration of the subject, in this point of view, will still direct and establish our faith, and lead us, like the ancient believers, under the influence of those supernatural manifestations, to erect an altar in our hearts to the Wonderful One, the Angel Jehovah, the God of our salvation, on which to offer a living sacrifice,—the sacrifice of our best affections, yea, our bodies and our souls, well-pleasing to God in him.

As the Angel of the Covenant, he is now, as he always was, the great cause of all intercourse between God and man; having restored that intercourse by fulfilling all the terms and conditions of the covenant of redemption. It was for this very purpose that he originally assumed the character; and when he came into the world, he in consequence appeared as the *Messenger*, the *Agent*, the *One sent*, not only to proclaim, but to procure, salvation. He comes to fulfil a work which none but himself could do, and in the performance of which the highest created intelligence must have sunk into destruction; the *acts* and *sufferings* were of such a nature, as none but an Almighty Agent could complete. But “our help was laid upon the *Mighty One*,” the *Angel-Jehovah*, a Person in Jehovah, took the office, and he is able to procure salvation to the uttermost. The being *sent*, when it is by a voluntary agreement between two parties, does not necessarily imply a primary inferiority or subjection; and such was the undertaking and mission of the Redeemer. He, therefore, as the glorious and almighty Saviour, cannot fail to accomplish all which he undertook, and is worthy of our implicit confidence.

“To finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness,” were works which no creature could attempt. To accomplish these important purposes, the curse of the Law must be endured; the wrath of God, and

the strokes of his righteous justice for sin, be sustained to the very uttermost; and a righteousness be wrought out complete and meritorious, which might demand, by its infinite excellency, acceptance on the behalf of his people. These were the terms which Divine truth and justice required for the sinner's pardon, for his justification, for the restoration of Divine favour, and that communion with the Creator which sin had interrupted. These were the terms of the admission of the Mediator himself into his mediatorial kingdom, in the glorified nature of his redeemed; and of his receiving the Spirit, to call, to sanctify, to preserve and save his people. These are also the terms of their admission to him, and with him, into the same glory. The character of the *Angel*, the *Angel of the Covenant*, is suited to him who undertakes a work like this; but the *Angel of Jehovah* alone is able to accomplish it. Behold, then, He stands forth—(eternal glory be to that Divine Person, that adorable Name!)—he stands forth, and engages in human nature to complete the design. Stand still, then, my soul, for a moment, in contemplation of his amazing acts of condescending grace. Made of a woman, made under the law for man, he assumes the character of the Servant of his Father, and performs his will. His whole life is one continued series of sufferings, and acts of obedience, till, in its closing scenes, the garden witnessed his agonies, and the cross finished his labours and sorrow. There, under the load of our imputed guilt, and the sufferings of Divine displeasure, transferred from the sinner to the sinner's voluntary Surety, he suffered and he died; and the tomb received the dying Saviour, and witnessed that the work was finished. But, lo! it willingly yields up its prey, and dismisses the triumphant Conqueror from within its enclosure; because, having finished the sufferings, "he could not be holden of death:" he must, yes, he does, ascend on high, and opens the way to God! Thus the great Angel of the Covenant completed his undertaking. That meritorious atonement, that perfect ransom, that infinite righteousness, which he thus wrought out, ever retain

their virtue and their efficacy; that the humble penitent sinner may plead them at the Throne, receive them in the exercise of faith, and freely enjoy their everlasting benefits. Yea, still, as the Angel-Jehovah, he pleads before the Throne the acts and sufferings of his humiliation; thus securing their effects, and carrying on the same office, though in a different manner. And this he will do in all its parts, till its design is fully answered in the actual salvation of all his covenant and redeemed people.

For this purpose, also, as the *Angel of the Covenant*, in another view of the subject, he appears as the *Messenger of Peace* to ruined sinners, publishing his own salvation.

That salvation which he finished on the cross, he himself now in his Gospel proclaims. Is he not “anointed to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to declare the acceptable year of the Lord?” (Luke iv. 17—21.) Yes; in this character he opened his commission in the synagogue of Nazareth, where the blessed Saviour himself first became the Messenger of his own grace. The message of peace which he proclaims, is founded upon his fulfilment of the terms of the covenant by himself; whereby all its blessings are ensured, and the faithfulness of God stands engaged to communicate all of them to his redeemed. Hence God is said to have “preached peace by Jesus Christ.” (Acts x. 36.) When he first delivered the tidings of salvation, how pleasant and how powerful was the Redeemer’s voice! Still he publishes the same in his word and in the Gospel ministry, and speaks more powerfully by his *Spirit* to the heart. In the declarations of his word he discovers that all the causes of enmity and of wrath are removed; all that stood between a holy God and guilty sinners;—that all is *done* which is necessary for the pardon and justification of the condemned sinner; all *procured* which is sufficient for the regeneration, preservation, and glorification of his people;—and that all treasures



of grace and of power are laid up in himself, to save from death and hell. What message like this can meet the ear of a trembling penitent! “As cold water to the thirsty soul, so is this good news from a far country.” What Messenger like this to a ruined race! “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth these good tidings?” (Isa. lii. 7.) During his prolonged absence from his church, his ministers, commissioned by him, proclaim the same message, and say, “God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,” &c. (2 Cor. v. 20, &c.) But the great *Angel of the Covenant* has alone proclaimed this with the authority of One who “knows the mind of the Father:” his ministers proclaim it only by his direction, and on his authority. He speaks “what he hath seen and heard” in the great counsels of *Jehovah*. Let us not, then, “turn away from him who speaketh from heaven.”

As the *Angel of the Covenant*, he is the only mean of, and still maintains, that intercourse between God and his people which he opened by his death and resurrection. As our access to God is grounded only upon what he has done, so all our personal approaches must be made in him, by him, and through him. He “having blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances which was against us, which was contrary to us, and taken it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;” “having made peace by the blood of his cross”—“now, in Christ Jesus, we, who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh;” “we have access by one *Spirit* to the Father.” (Col. ii. 14; Eph. ii. 13, 18.) Our persons, and therefore our services, our prayers, and praises, find admission and acceptance, which otherwise, as unworthy, must be totally rejected. This truth was strikingly represented in the figurative circumstances attending his ancient appearance to Manoah and his wife, as before alluded to. Obedient to his directions, in preparing and offering a burnt-sacrifice to *Jehovah*, they thus express their faith in his atonement, and the all-sufficient sacrifice of his cross: “And the *Angel* did wondrously, and

Manoah and his wife looked on ; for it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the *Angel of the Lord* ascended in the flame of the altar." (Judges xiii. 19, 20.) Here faith beholds the true burnt-offering accepted of the Father ; it sees the crucified Jesus ascending from the cross to the throne, carrying the sweet perfume, the infinite virtue of his atoning sacrifice, into the presence of God ; " *by* his own blood entering within the veil." Here, indeed, the *Angel Jehovah* doeth wondrously ; and through him all our offerings ascend, and find acceptance ! When we come and plead the atoning sacrifice, the meritorious righteousness, and finished work, of Jesus : when, depending only on his fulness, we present our supplications, he ascends again in our prayers and praises, and, by the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and intercession, renders all well pleasing to the Father : like the cloud of perfume, from the sweet incense, within the veil, before the mercy-seat, his meritorious intercession ascends ; and our prayers, carried up in the hand of our great High Priest, wait for their answer at the throne of a gracious God. This is as truly the case now, though invisibly conducted, as when, under the form of the *Angel of the Lord*, he bore the sacrifice of Manoah to the throne, and procured its acceptance. His people, at times, in the exercise of faith realize the privilege. They know that the Lord is with them, and rejoice in their acceptance through him. And if faith were more genuine, lively, and abiding, it would give greater honour to his character and work, and bring more abundant consolation to the heart. " Lord, increase our faith." (See Heb. ix. 11—15 ; and x. 12—23.)

But he especially appears now in this character, as the *Conductor* of all the concerns of the world and of the church ;—of the world, in his general providence for their benefit ; of his church, by his special providence and grace.

When he engaged, in the covenant of redemption, to be the great Agent in accomplishing the mystery and purposes of God, the providential direction of universal nature was included in the vast undertaking. It is evident from

his former appearances before his incarnation, that he then managed the concerns of the world and his ancient people. And whenever he appeared as the *Angel of the Covenant*, he appeared with tokens of Divine majesty and glory: he spake as God, was worshipped as God, and acknowledged as the Director of the affairs of men. Though he humbled himself in his incarnation for a time, when he appeared “in the form of a servant,” to accomplish the work of redemption, yet he again ascended on high in the nature of his brethren, and took possession of the glory which he had with the Father before all worlds. Now upon the throne above, he appears again “as the Head over all things to his Church.” With this view of his dignity he comforted his disciples, under the sorrows occasioned by their apprehension of his absence: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” (Matt. xxviii. 18; compare John xvii. 2.) This was the true glory of his mediatorial character, the comprehension and extent of the covenant of promise, that, being made for a little time lower than the angels, he should, in consequence of his sufferings in that state, “be crowned with glory and honour”—be set over the works of God, and have “all things put in subjection under his feet.” (Heb. ii. 7—9.) This is the dignity and glory which he possesses on the throne. (Psa. cx. 1; compare 1 Cor. xv. 25—27.) When, therefore, he again appears in vision to the beloved disciple, under this character, to disclose the purposes of God to the end, he is the Governor of all; he alone prevails to open the books and to loose the seals of the Divine purposes and providences, which “no one (not *no man*, but *no one*,) in heaven nor in earth, nor under the earth, was able to open, neither to look thereon.” Throughout the whole of that mysterious book, he is represented as the great Agent, accomplishing whatever events its prophetic declarations include. Whatever, then, takes place in the world, in the rise of nations, or the fall of empires, “he is the Doer of it.” Amidst the disorders and commotions of the kingdoms, or in the tranquillizing their troubled and tumultuous waves, he



presides over, and regulates, the storm. He suffers the passions of men to work, but holds them in his reins, and compels them to accomplish *his* purposes, while they *seem* to fulfil *their own*. “The wrath of man shall praise Thee; O Lord, and the remainder of wrath thou wilt restrain.” Under his directions are the concerns and the hearts of all men. His settled and determinate purposes are accomplished, though oftentimes “by wicked hands,” and wicked designs. He terminates their plans *when* he pleases, and, notwithstanding all their confident expectations, *how* and *as* he pleases. They are sure to promote his glory, and are overruled, by infinite wisdom and almighty power, for the purposes of his redeeming love.

But, in a peculiar manner, and by a special providence, he is conducting his church and people through the wilderness. And, though neither the pillar of fire nor of cloud discover his immediate presence, in the power of his Spirit he yet directs them, and by his wisdom and might he still preserves them. His promise is daily fulfilled in the believer’s experience, “Lo, I am with thee always,” &c. “I will never leave thee; I will never, no never, forsake thee.” Though his mighty arm does not open the sea before them, yet seas of difficulties and troubles often yield to the secret power of his providence, or to the sweet and refreshing word of his grace. Though he no longer rain down upon them the perishing manna, or give them water from the rock, he feeds them spiritually with the *Bread of Life*, that “true bread which cometh down from heaven;” and opens for them the fountain and wells of salvation in the dry and thirsty land, and gives them the water of life to drink. Though we hear him not as personally present in the terrors of mount *Sinai*, yet, from the Mount *Sion*, the voice of his grace proceeds, and mingles with the sweet precepts of the *law of love* the tidings of salvation. Though he no longer rain upon the enemies of his church the destructive storm, or visibly drown them in the overflowing sea, yet still he says to

every oppressor, "Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further." Still he promises, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper:" still "he giveth us the victory," and "we shall be more than conquerors, through him who loveth us." Though he open not the floods of *Jordan*, yet, "when they pass through the waters, he will be with them, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow them;" they pass the floods of death secure of the inheritance beyond. And, though he divides not among them the earthly Canaan, the land once flowing with milk and honey; he is gone before to the heavenly possession, the Canaan that is above, and soon, as the *Angel JEHOVAH*, he shall divide among his conquering tribes that inheritance which is "incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

In the mean time, not a trouble, not a sorrow, not a fear, not a danger by the way, but he knows, directs, restrains, and will turn for the good of his people. All blessings are in his hands, both temporal and spiritual, to give as his wisdom sees best, and as his covenant love directs him. "The Lord will give *grace* and *glory*, and no good thing will he withhold," &c. This *Mighty Angel* will safely conduct his people through. There can be no deficiency in his wisdom, or his power; no deficiency in the fulness of his grace, and his faithfulness shall never fail those who trust in him. Let, then, our trust and confidence in him never fail, that we may give him the glory of his all-sufficient grace, and we shall receive out of his fulness grace for grace, through grace to glory.

What he *hath* done; and what he is now *doing*, are earnest of what he *will do*, to complete his designs of salvation. As the Angel of the Covenant, he hath fulfilled all the terms upon which the covenant blessings were suspended. Whenever, therefore, a sense of need leads the penitent sinner to the throne of grace, the promise of his Gospel secures his enjoyment of the blessings. He receives all who come to him; and his grace stands pledged

to lead, his power to keep, his covenant love to bless, and his faithfulness to perfect, his believing people. He never will give up his office till its designs are accomplished.

We are ready to wish for the repetition of those appearances with which he favoured his church of old, as affording a greater evidence to faith, and certainty to hope. But the views which the Gospel gives of his person and government are far beyond these in their simplicity, clearness, and glory; and are more suited to establish our confidence and our joy. Let faith realize them, and our security and comfort will be complete. (See 2 Pet. i. 16—19.)

The conduct of the world and of the church, of our persons, families, and connections, may well be left, with perfect satisfaction, in his hands. While following the path of duty, and of Providence, we may be confident that all is right; all must be right which comes from him. He, who in such amazing grace and condescension undertook such a wonderful office, and who hath so far accomplished his undertaking, will, doubtless, conduct it to the end, to his own honour, to magnify his character, and to glorify all his perfections, in fulfilling it to his people.

Every believer in the end shall join the testimony of the dying Patriarch: "*My God* hath fed me all my life long to this day, the Angel of the Covenant hath redeemed me from all evil." (Gen. xlviii. 15, 16.) Then he who hath the keys of death and the grave shall come in his own time and way, to open the gates, and disclose the entrance to that glorious kingdom, which he hath prepared for the objects of his everlasting love; that "where he is, there his people may be."

Thus shall he maintain his dominion over all, till the designs of his undertaking be completed, till all things are brought under his feet, and till he hath collected his whole purchased inheritance to himself. Then, for the last time, he shall appear in this mediatorial character; and as the *Mighty Angel*, clothed with a cloud, (the emblem of the mysteriousness of his dispensation,) a rainbow on his head, (the token of covenant grace,) his face as it



were the sun, (in his Divine glories,) his feet as pillars of fire, (the emblem of majesty and strength,) he shall lift up his hand to heaven, and proclaim with a loud voice, that there shall be time no longer. (Rev. x. 1, &c.) Then shall the mediatorial kingdom be delivered up, and he himself, shining in the union of the Divine nature, and in all the glories of the Divine perfections for ever, **GOD shall be ALL IN ALL.**

## ESSAY III.

### Advocate—Intercessor.

IT is the distinguishing glory of Christianity, that it draws aside the veil which is suspended between the present and the future, the visible and the invisible world; while every thing beside drops us on this side the grave, the Christian revelation carries our views beyond, shews us what is transacted there, in the world of spirits, and opens to the mind of the believer its wonderful glories and felicities. It is the excellency of the Christian faith, that it realizes these invisible scenes, and thus brings down, as it were, these high and distant objects into the mind, effecting a most interesting, desirable, and pleasing change, in our expectations and our hopes. Hence faith becomes such an efficacious principle, influencing the conduct, and producing those wonders, for which the world cannot account, in its triumph over every impediment of sin and sorrow in the way to glory. (See Heb. ch. xi.)

But in the words of Divine truth we have not only the statement of the *doctrine*, but the *fact*. The well-attested fact of the resurrection and ascension of the crucified Jesus confirms the scriptural declarations of a spiritual and invisible world, and brings them as near to the mind, and presents them to the understanding in as clear a light as in the present state we are capable of discerning them. There, also, we are directed for our greater consolation, to the glories of his person, the characters and offices he sustains, and the employments which now occupy his attention upon the heavenly throne.

Among these, the character of *Advocate*, or *Intercessor*, is one of the most endearing; it secures our access to the

Father, confirms the expectation of faith, and insures the bestowal of his blessings, the fruits of his complete redemption in the salvation of all his people.

Glorious Advocate! to thy hand would we commit our cause, assured of its success, since thou canst not plead in vain. May thy Spirit glorify thee in this character, so suited to our ignorance and wants, that, in the consideration, thy name may become increasingly precious, and our heart rest satisfied in the glorious undertaking of such a powerful Mediator; who, on the throne above, will never cease to be the friend of his afflicted saints below.

When the Scripture speaks of those for whom he pleads, they are often called his people. They were “chosen in Christ Jesus,” and “given to him of their Father,” to be redeemed, called, and saved. But, in inquiring as to our interest in this eternal purpose of grace, it is always necessary to pursue the investigation upwards, and not downwards; not in a descending, but ascending, gradation; from the acts of grace upon us, to infer the eternal designs and counsel of grace towards us: and not, from a vain unscriptural presumption in the counsels of grace in our favour, to claim a special *interest in its blessings*. It is our calling which proves our election and our interest in his everlasting love; and here we must begin the important inquiry. Holding this in view, and comparing two or three different passages of Scripture, in which the office is described, we shall easily attain the knowledge of those who are, and whether we are, the subjects of this all-prevalent intercession. When the purposes, the terms, and the blessings of the covenant, are described by the Prophet, in consequence of his fulfilment of those terms, and in the act of bestowing these blessings, the glorified Redeemer is said “to make intercession *for the transgressors*.” (Isa. liii. 10.) Hence it is evident, that his people were in nature and practice the same as others; that they were amongst the *transgressors of the law*. But as, in this state of sin and ignorance, it is impossible to have any knowledge of our interest in his



salvation, the Apostle goes further, and describes their character, in a manner which brings it down upon a level with our state, and renders it easy to be understood: "He ever liveth to make intercession for those who come unto God by him." (Heb. vii. 25.)

In a general view, we are told, "He came to seek and to save those which were lost." Hence the invitations of the Gospel are all general and indefinite: "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." When a sinner feels his state of sin and ruin, this must be welcomed as good tidings to his fearful soul. When the Spirit of Divine grace becomes his teacher, as a lost sinner in himself, he apprehends his sin, and guilt, and danger; he believes that Christ is the only appointed way of salvation: fully satisfied of the truth of these things, he is willing to come; and in this way, upon the credit of the Divine promise, he does come, with humiliation for sin, and earnest desire of pardon, acceptance, and deliverance, to God in Christ alone. Now "he sets to his seal that God is true," by trusting his word of truth, and waiting for the saving grace of Christ, the appointed, acknowledged, and accepted Saviour.

The character is plain and simple; it is the invariable character of those who are called of God; it describes the first exercises of that grace in the heart; and for such, the Apostle declares, the intercession of Jesus is presented, that he might be "able to save them to the uttermost." Let this question be decided; Am I thus coming to God in Christ Jesus? and, if so, all the blessings of salvation shall follow. The grace I feel is the effect of that intercession which shall be engaged in completing the work to everlasting glory; and the contemplation of this character opens *all its stores of blessings to my soul.*

The two grand points for consideration are, the grounds upon which it is presented, or the plea he uses, and its prevalence with the Father; these lay the foundation of

his people's security, and will claim, in their successful issue, their *eternal praise*!

The *grounds of his intercession*, as they lie at the foundation of all his claims, and of our hopes, must first *engage our attention*. We see the ever-blessed Redeemer anticipating the exercise of their character, and beginning this act of his mediatorial undertaking for his people, while yet on earth. His last prayer to his heavenly Father, before he entered upon the immediate scene of his sufferings, was not for himself, but for them; a prayer which, in its season, and its fervency of expression, admirably manifests the love of his heart, and his fixed purposes for their salvation. What he then pleaded on earth, we may reasonably suppose, he is still pleading beyond in the heavens, presenting his claim with an authority, suited to that state of dignity and glory to which he is there exalted. His intercession is not the humble doubting supplication of a dependent creature, but the authoritative claim of an equal, founded upon the covenant engagements of the eternal *Three*; and is thus certain in *its effects*. “Father, *I will*,” said the gracious Advocate on earth; and he founds his claim,—

1. Upon the *gift of them from the Father*. “Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” (John xvii. 2.)—“I have manifested thy name to the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me” (ver. 6).—“I pray not for the world, I pray for them which thou hast given me” (ver. 9).—“Keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me” (ver. 11).—These are all “which shall believe on him through the word” (ver. 20).—And these shall all “behold his glory.”—“Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me” (ver. 24). Surely we have reason to conclude that he is still presenting, for a memorial, in the same covenant-love—still calling to re-

membrance—the counsels of eternity, and the everlasting purposes of grace; the distinct engagements of each Person in Jehovah, for accomplishing the economy of redemption in discharge of his own official undertaking, for the complete redemption and final salvation of all his people.

But the full ground of claim, according to the eternal covenant, is, the whole of his work, as absolutely finished on their behalf. To this he alludes under the idea of a *sanctification*, or *separation*, to some great design, which he was then about to accomplish (ver. 19): “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified by the truth.”

2. Upon the fulness of his own *atonement*. The *propitiation through his blood*, on their behalf, is, no doubt, the meritorious cause of all their blessings; and therefore the great plea of their heavenly Intercessor. If we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, this secures his admission and acceptance, “that he was the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John ii. 1.) When, therefore, the veil of the heavenly world is removed, and its glories unfolded in the prophetic vision of the Apostle, He appears standing in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, as a *Lamb*, “*a lamb as it had been slain.*” (Rev. v. 6.) In this character he appeared to take away the sin of the world, to take upon him the sins of his people, and to give himself for us an offering and a sacrifice, well-pleasing unto God; as such he stands before the throne, to place there the perpetual memorials of his dying love. We are accustomed to look upon him, and to consider him, as appearing in this character upon earth, with peculiar satisfaction; how must that satisfaction be increased, when faith beholds him standing in the same character, bearing still all the marks of his condescension and suffering before the throne? still the same Lamb of God, the Friend of sinners there equally as upon the cross.

As the blood of the sacrifice, on the great day of atonement, secured the admission of the Jewish high-priest



within the veil ; so the atonement of his blood, and the virtue of his propitiation, opened to him the *right* of entrance into the heavens *in our nature*. “ By his own blood (δια τῆς ἰδίας αἱματος) he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” This, which secured his admission on our behalf, equally secures ours ; for, if his atonement be complete, it cannot but be accepted, and accepted on the behalf of those for whom it was offered : this was not for himself, but for us. As, therefore, by this “ one offering, he hath perfected for ever them which are sanctified,” “ we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.” This is the new and living way which he hath consecrated for us by his own first entrance through the veil, that is to say, his flesh ; and now “ we have a great High-Priest over the house of God,” who, as the Jewish high-priest, on the day of atonement, sprinkled the sacred blood before the propitiatory, is presenting his own blood before the Throne, for the acceptance and salvation of his people. (Compare Heb. ix. 11—15, x. 14—21.) There, while he shews his once suffering and agonizing human body, his pierced hands and feet, his wounded side, his bleeding heart, and deserted and afflicted soul ; while all the mysteries of that scene of sufferings are remembered, and come up for a memorial before God, where he endured for us the sentence of the law, the curse of sin, and the wrath of God ; for us they plead ; they plead for every returning and believing sinner. The Saviour himself presents the plea. We seem to hear his language most impressive and effectual : “ Deliver him from going down into the pit ;” behold the appointed ransom ! accept the returning sinner ; bless the penitent believer, who takes hold of my strength that he may make peace with thee ; let the purchase of my blood be the object of thy favour, till blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places with myself.

But the whole of the Redeemer's work includes not only the atonement through his blood, but

3. His *absolutely perfect* and *infinitely meritorious*

*righteousness.* It is therefore spoken of as a necessary part of the character of our Advocate, that he is “*Jesus Christ the Righteous* ;” righteous, not only in *himself*, but as our *Mediator and Surety*. His undertaking may be justly considered, in one grand point of view, as an engagement to “fulfil all righteousness ;” an engagement which, in the most comprehensive sense, he truly fulfilled. Every part of his character and of his conduct, his actions and his sufferings, were directed to this object, till he could say, “It is finished.”

But as he took that nature in which this righteousness was to be wrought for us, as he pledged himself for this obedience only on our account, as he finished it in the character of our *Surety*, and as in the vicarious performance of it he both suffered upon the cross and was accepted of the Father in his resurrection and ascension,—this forms the proper ground of his intercession, and constitutes a plea on behalf of his people, *which can never be rejected*. Upon the union of his atoning blood and everlasting righteousness, is founded his perfect right to the mediatorial throne. Since “he became obedient to death, even the death of the cross ;” “therefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.” (Phil. ii. 8—10.) For this he is “crowned with glory and honour,” the pledge of his people’s future admission. (Heb. ii. 9, &c.) Since he is, then, to accomplish his designs of love, and superintend the execution of all the plans of grace, the salvation of his redeemed is secured. In this view of the subject, indeed, we consider the righteousness of Jesus Christ, not only as the fulfilment of the *moral law*, but as the completing every engagement of the covenant on the behalf of his people, *the whole will of God* as to the *terms* of their salvation. He was, indeed, in a more restricted view, “made under the law,” and therefore became “obedient to the law for man.” In his own person he was “without blemish and without spot ;” “he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth :” his active

obedience was equal to all the demands of the law ; he was the living copy of its essential purity. In this view he was “ the end of the law for righteousness ” to his people ; and became “ the Lord our righteousness and strength : ” and as no previous obligation could demand his obedience, he was capable of undertaking for his people ; his infinitely meritorious righteousness, therefore, deriving its dignity from the glories of his Divine person, being his own voluntary act on the behalf of his people, is properly and legally *their* righteousness, when received by faith on these accounts : since “ he became sin for them,” they become “ the righteousness of God in him.” This, surely, when pleaded on high, must become effectual for their acceptance ; and when received into the heart and conscience, by faith, brings peace and joy unspeakable, because “ *it justifies the ungodly.* ”

Here, then, we see what is the proper ground of our dependence ; what must form the substance of our plea at the throne of grace,—the same, no doubt, which Jesus is offering before the Throne above. If impressed with a true sense of the depravity of nature, and the guilt of sin, we shall never venture to approach in the spirit of the self-applauding Pharisee, nor rest our hope on any inherent goodness or legal righteousness, but on “ the righteousness which is by faith of Jesus Christ.” No other way will ever bring sinners near to the Father, but Christ Jesus ; no other plea but his atonement and obedience will ever meet with acceptance with him. A confidence in any thing beside is but the delusion of pride ; and the presenting it before the Throne, as the hope of our acceptance, will be esteemed an act of rebellion against the authority of God, and not of duty ; an opposition to his appointment ; a base contempt of the glory of Christ, and the fulness of his salvation. (Phil. iii. 23.) The only security of a believing sinner’s expectation and hope is, that our Advocate above has sufficient grounds for his intercession, and that he is continually presenting them before the Throne. His resur-



rection and ascension are, indeed, the sufficient proofs to us of the acceptance of his work, and that his plea is always heard and answered: and let the guilty sinner concur with Christ, and present the same in faith, his person and his services shall be accepted, and mercy and grace be bestowed according to his guilt and need.

4. The *covenant engagements* and *promises* of the Persons in Jehovah, to the God-man the Redeemer, as they insured the performance and acceptance of his work, are also another ground of his intercession. His substituted offering and sacrifice, his everlasting righteousness, infinite in worth and value, open the door of mercy, and procure blessings to guilty sinners, in a way suitable to the Divine glory and perfection. And, as the wisdom and love of the eternal Jehovah provided these to become the means of salvation, so his truth and justice stand pledged for their acceptance and reward. The mercy of Jehovah is secured to his Christ for evermore; his covenant stands fast with him, and his seed is established for ever. (Psa. lxxxix. 28—37.)—This is more expressly declared by the Prophet: “When his soul is made an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands; he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied: by his knowledge (or, the knowledge of him) shall my righteous Servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong*; because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and *made intercession* for the transgressors.” (Isa. liii. 10—12.) What he is pleading for his people above is, the fulfilment of this covenant engagement, for the bestowal of the promised reward, and the accomplishment of this promised salvation, to all his people. Then there can be no foundation for doubt or uncertainty to the happy believer, who is interested in it. Faith is encouraged to rest upon the promise with confidence, because the faithfulness of God

is pledged, and the power of the Spirit engaged, for the glory of Christ and for the honour of his work, that his sufferings and his intercession shall not be in vain!

5. The *actual acknowledgment and acceptance* of his perfect work *in the power of his resurrection* and his *admission to glory*, is a still further plea, which secures the manifestations of the Divine favour, and the continued exercise of all the attributes of Jehovah to accomplish the desires of the Redeemer's heart. His offerings are remembered, his sacrifice accepted; the counsel of Messiah shall, therefore, be fulfilled. In his salvation we, then, may rejoice and set up *our* banners; for the Lord will fulfil all his petitions. He hath saved his anointed, and will hear him from his holy heaven, with the saving strength of his right hand; let the *King* Messiah hear us, then, when we call. (See Psa. xx, and xxi.)

When we thus consider the glory of his person, the work which he is performing, and the ground upon which it rests for acceptance and success, well may we raise our expectations high, for we cannot raise them too high, as to

The prevalence of his intercession on our behalf:

It shall prevail, first, for the acceptance of our *persons*; and then of our *services*. Unworthy as they both are, the hand which presents them shall render them well-pleasing. "Through him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Eph. ii. 18.) (*προσαγωγήν*, an introduction.) The word alludes to the manner of being first introduced at the court of an earthly prince, by some one about the royal person, without which it would be an insult to intrude into his presence; but after which the liberty of access remains, and is always open. Thus Jesus, our Friend in the court of heaven, can alone introduce us with acceptance; and once brought near by him, "we have boldness to approach the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need." A sinner presented by his hand is no longer viewed as in himself: "washed, justified, sanctified in the name of the Lord

Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," as such he appears accepted. He presents the humble sinner washed as to his conscience with the atoning blood, and as to his heart by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. His filthy garments are taken away, and the robe of everlasting righteousness covers and adorns his once polluted person. Thus, in the eye of Infinite Purity, he appears comely with that comeliness that Jesus hath put upon him. Now, then, he presents his *offerings* well-pleasing to God through Christ Jesus. His imperfect and polluted services are presented by the same hand, and cleansed by the same grace; and are all acceptable, being "sanctified by the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xv. 16.) Lift up thy head, then, thou contrite mourning penitent; let this encourage thy weak and wavering faith. Thou art lamenting the depravity of thy heart, and the defilement of thy services; thou art discouraged with the sense not only of unworthiness, but of guilt, in both: but behold the gracious Advocate of sinners is before the Throne, and engages to present thee with his own hand, and thy services in connection with his own meritorious work; so that they shall never more be viewed apart: a holy God shall ever view the guilt of the one as taken upon Christ; and the merit of the other as granted unto thee. If sin and pollution demand their rejection, his atoning blood and righteousness demand their acceptance for the honour of his undertaking, and the glory of his own complete redemption. It is impossible for thee to come near, but with such a friend as this: it is impossible that any sinner should be rejected when thus coming through Jesus. The Lord the Spirit give us faith, that we may give glory to our heavenly Advocate, by trusting all our concerns in his hands, satisfied of his interest in the court of heaven, and confidently relying on his all-sufficiency of grace, and the unchangeableness of his truth, to fulfil his office for the benefit of his believing people.

If the Divine Spirit has become our teacher, whose great office it is to testify of, and glorify, the Redeemer,



we have seen our need of such a friend, have really committed our souls to him in faith, expecting nothing as sinners from a holy God, but from and through him. Nothing, indeed, but the grace of the Divine Spirit can ever bring our hearts to these views; which imply so deep a humiliation of self, such an abasement of human pride, such a renunciation of all the confidences and dependences to which the corrupt heart of man is prone. To yield up every hope from our own exertions and duties, and to place our own confidence alone on the atoning sacrifice and righteousness of the Redeemer, and the power and grace of his quickening Spirit, is a disposition so contrary to nature that it can never arise from this source, but will be invariably opposed, as degrading to its *supposed dignity and moral powers*. It is, however, the spirit that becomes a sinner; and the only way in which we can approach near to God. If we are not brought into such a temper, it is because of the ignorance and darkness and pride in which our nature is involved. These prevent us from discerning its true state, and nourish that spirit of self-confidence and unbelief, which is unwilling to submit to the humbling grace of the Gospel, or that love of sin which desires not its salvation. But, if “he which believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life,” let it also be remembered, that “he which believeth not the Son of God shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (John iii. 36.) Under the impression of this solemn truth, let us seriously inquire where our hopes are placed: whether our souls and all our interests are surrendered up into his hands; whether Jesus is all our salvation, and all our desire. Happy is it, if the Spirit of grace hath brought our hearts to this; he will accept the surrender, and keep all we commit to him against the great day. In the mean while, his intercession shall prevail,

1. For the communication of *all spiritual blessings* to the hearts of his people.—His design in his exaltation is the same as in his humiliation; and, if the one has become effectual, how much more shall the other. The reasoning

of the Apostle is founded upon this—The living and glorified Saviour shall accomplish what the dying Saviour began. “If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” (Rom. v. 10.) His ever living before the throne, secures to his people the enjoyment of all saving blessings. They were put into his hands, upon his ascension to his kingdom: “When he ascended on high, he received gifts for men;” and shall he not communicate them? He soon manifested not only the power of his arm, but the love of his heart; not only his possession of the promised gifts, but his determination to bestow them: when he poured down the greatest of all gifts, that greatest of all promised blessings, the gift of his Spirit upon his church, to *remain within it for ever*. When by the Divine influences of that Spirit he calls his people to himself, to a reliance upon his salvation, and submission to his authority, he gives in this the earnest of every future, every needful blessing, to complete their salvation. “Faithful is he who hath called you, who also will do it.” In him his people are blessed with *all* spiritual blessings, in the heavenly places. United with him, they partake of the glories of his resurrection and his inheritance (Eph. ii. 1—3); and the prayer of faith shall bring down the communication, while presented with the fragrant perfume of his intercession *before the throne*. For “this is the confidence which we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his (revealed) will, he heareth us: and if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we desired of him.” (1 John v. 14, 15.)

2. By his intercession *every enemy shall be silenced*, and every *accuser of the brethren be cast down*.—Who shall bring the charge, when the Lord Jesus Christ is there to answer? He who hath undertaken to plead the cause of his people will do it effectually. Whatever charges the law or the enemy may bring against us, while he points to his complete atonement, and infinite righteousness wrought

out on their behalf, while he secures their interest in these, *nothing shall condemn*. This is the triumph of the Apostle, the triumph which he puts into the mouth of every believer; “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? (We answer) it is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who (then) shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?—nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.” (Rom. viii. 33, &c.) Let the guilty penitent dismiss his fears and say, “Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God.”

3. By this intercession all the *concerns of his people* shall be graciously managed.—This not only secures the needful grace to sanctify the heart, but engages Infinite Wisdom and Almighty Power to guide his people through; to direct their concerns under a providential interposition, and lead them in the right way to the city of habitation. His great design upon his throne is, to bring them finally to himself. To this confidence he directs them in order to quiet all their fears, and ease their hearts of trouble, when troubles are all around them. While from thence he watches over their interest, communicates his grace, and guides the concerns of the world around them, the great design of all is, to prepare them for, to make them meet for, and to bring them to, glory. Thus he represents to his disciples the design of his departure from them, and the objects which are engaging his attention. “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. And, if I go and prepare a place for you, I will, doubtless, come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John xiv. 2, 3.)

How glorious was the Jewish high-priest, when, on the great day of atonement, he entered within the veil, arrayed in his garments of purity, bearing on his shoulders and on



his heart, engraved on the most costly stones, the names of the *twelve tribes of Israel*. There he presented them in his sacred office, together with the wood and incense, which secured his and their acceptance, as a memorial before the Lord. But how far did the illustrious type fall short of the more illustrious Antitype! when he appears with the names of every individual of his people, on the shoulder of his Almighty power, and on the heart of his infinite compassion, *before the Mercy-seat above*. In one respect, indeed, he falls infinitely short: the one was soon to go out again from the holy place, soon to lay down his office, or soon to offer again the sacrifices which could never take away sin: but our High-Priest, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood; his one offering is perfect, and perfects his people for ever; he is entered, to go out no more; his intercession therefore is

*Constant and eternal.*—If any thing could interrupt its exercise, it would be the sins of his people; but as these constitute their peculiar need, it is then especially when they feel their sin and guilt that they are encouraged to look to him, as engaged in the delightful employ for them. “If any of us sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.” His intercession is unchangeable, unintermitting in its exercise, and eternal in its duration. What a consolation to the returning penitent, amidst the fears of unworthiness, the consciousness of various wanderings, and numberless backslidings of the heart? Since Jesus, the Son of God, is pleading before the Throne, we may still hold fast our profession; for we have not an High-Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. (Heb. iv. 14, 15.) Let us adore the unchanging grace and love of the Lord Jesus. Still on the throne he bears the same tenderness, the same compassion, towards his people, as when in human nature he pitied their distresses, supplied all their wants, and healed all their diseases. The interest of his people lies yet close upon

his heart; he glories in the character of the Friend and Saviour of sinners. How happy to have such a friend, engaged in such an office, for us! We need no other intercessor. Vain is the papal folly, that would direct us to saints or angels to mediate with the Father, or to excite the renewed attention of the Saviour to their wants. While he bears them all upon his shoulders, and upon his heart, he needs no remembrancer; and while he presents their persons, prayers, and wants, they need no *Advocate beside*; they cannot doubt his wisdom, his omniscient discernment, his unchanging affection, nor his *interest in the court above*. It is, then, the daily exercise of faith to bring all to him, to expect all from him and through him; but to expect no blessing, but as in him. This will be found sufficient to satisfy the conscience and purify the heart and conduct. You feel the humbling conviction of sin, guilt, and unworthiness: but remember, that the Lord Jesus on this very account is pleading before the Throne; and pleading what is all-sufficient for pardon, justification, and salvation,—pleading not any thing in the sinner, not any thing wrought in or by his people, no, but his own work exclusively, to his own glory. As his acceptance in the offering has been testified by the power of the Father and of the Spirit, in his admission to glory, no doubt he shall be accepted when pleading it for his people, for the bestowal of all the blessings of grace and glory upon them. These considerations are calculated to overthrow the power, the strong bulwarks, of unbelief; to answer every fear, doubt, and distrust, in the conscience of the humble penitent. Fail not, then, to come to him daily; to realize what he hath done, and what he is now doing; as that which alone can bring ease to the conscience, or peace to the troubled breast. (John xiv. 1.) There is something also in this view, which tends most to purify the heart, and to furnish the strongest motive against the indulgence or practice of iniquity. The object of his intercession is, to deliver his people from the guilt of sin—its power, and final consequences: shall not, then, his people join issue with him in his design, and pray

and watch, and strive in his strength against the enemies of their Lord? Shall not the same mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus, when he suffered for sin, and which now influences him in his work before the Throne? Shall it not be our desire to have that work accomplished on which his heart is so set? While, then, we realize, for the peace of our conscience, the fulness of his pardoning grace, let us “fight the good fight of faith;” and in his strength oppose every corruption, and every enemy. The sense, indeed, of his pardoning love upon the heart will always be most effectual in promoting these holy desires. Every believer knows, that the seasons in which his heart is most set against sin are, when he is most impressed with the views of his great and sure salvation. Here, then, let our minds dwell, till we feel the sacred influence; here let us recur in every time when guilt or fears arise; again referring our cause to the all-prevailing Advocate, and trusting in him for all needful grace, unto the end. How suitable is such a character to us in this corrupted state! how suitable the Person who hath undertaken to exercise it! and how glorious and secure its performance by the exalted Jesus, Immanuel, in our nature, his once suffering nature, now before the Throne! Thou blessed Redeemer, undertake for me: to thee I commit my soul, my all: plead for me now amidst the infirmities of this sinful state, amidst all the difficulties of life, and the dangerous assaults of innumerable enemies. Plead my cause when I stand before the throne of judgment; then shall I stand accepted, and crowned with that eternal felicity the glory of which throughout eternity shall redound to the riches of thy grace, *and display the fulness and the all-sufficiency of thy salvation!*



## ESSAY IV.

**Lawgiver.**

IT is most usual and most delightful to the believer to consider the Lord Jesus under the title of the Saviour ; in this all his suitableness and all his most engaging characters are included ; but as he is the King and Lord of his church, he must of necessity be its righteous Lawgiver. He has a right to command ; he has wisdom to direct ; he has dignity and authority to sanction, and power to punish the transgressor. In this character he is no less acceptable to his people, who, by the power of his Spirit, always become his willing people. Their hearts are graciously inclined to obedience and submission. When the Prophet is describing the glorious Saviour of the church, he represents her as ever rejoicing in its glorious Lord, under this character united with that of the Saviour. (Isa. xxxiii. 22.) And when delineating the Redeemer in his sweetest characters of mercy and condescension, the loyal disposition of his obedient subjects, in his New-Testament church, is marked out by their submission to him in this character : “ *The isles shall wait for his law.*” (xlii. 4.)

Man, according to his original nature, had the law of God written in his heart, and needed no external revelation of his will to make it known ; but now, as a fallen creature, ignorant of God, he stands in need of a revealed rule of action : this, he finds, runs through the whole Scriptures of truth, and is chiefly comprehended in a beautiful summary, as to its moral precepts, in the Ten Commandments, delivered to Moses in the Mount, and engraved with the finger of the Almighty God. The ground of all which is, “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy

heart and soul and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." This, to man in paradise, was an internal principle of life, and formed between God and him a covenant of works by which he must either stand or fall. To a sinner in his present state the law can only discover his depravity, and give the knowledge of sin; but to a believer it has the most important uses: it is the directory and guide of that law of love which grace has written again on his heart, and is therefore the rule to which he desires and aims to conform his tempers and his conduct. It is not necessary, therefore, always to consider the term Law as implying its covenant form connected with all its righteous penalties, in which alone it can bring the mind under bondage: the adherence to this view has led many into dangerous mistakes. Nor must we confine the term Law to the Ten Commandments: the leading idea of the Scriptural term is, *instruction* and *direction*; and it generally comprehends the *whole revealed will of God*, in all its grand assemblage of truths, doctrines, and precepts. In this comprehensive view Jesus is the just, the great, the gracious Lawgiver of his church, and in this view we shall now consider him.

It may be proper, however, first to observe, that *universal nature* acknowledges him in this character. The order of nature, which is no other than the law by which it is governed, according to the appointment of its great Creator, was constituted and arranged by his infinite wisdom: "by the word of the Lord," or, by the Word Jehovah, "were the heavens made," and "by him all things consist." (Col. i. 17.) Therefore we say, "Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens; let them praise the name of the Lord; for he commanded, and they were created: he hath also stablished them for ever and ever, he hath made a decree which shall not pass." (Psa. cxlviii. 4—6.) If all the various orders and ranks of being were formed by his power, He alone could have the right to prescribe the laws by which they should be governed, as well as know the different relations which they sustained, so as to direct their different duties for general

happiness towards each other ; but the Scripture declares the first expressly, and frequently implies the latter.

It is, however, especially as the Lawgiver of his church from the beginning, that we design to contemplate the character. No doubt the ancient Patriarchs acted under the direction of a traditionary law, from the mouth of the Creator ; and in many peculiar instances his more immediate directions and interpositions are recorded ; but his first public assumption of the character was to the Jewish church, in the public delivery of the precepts of his holy law, when they were recorded upon written tables. This dispensation of his law, in its full extent, included three distinct branches, or codes, which were different in their nature, design, and continuance,—the judicial, the ceremonial, and the moral.

The Judicial Law was the law of their civil government, wherein God, as the immediate King and Governor of his peculiar people, prescribed the code of their civil jurisprudence, the statutes of their courts of judicature, reserving often to himself the final decision. Thus He manifested, that they were under a form of government peculiar to themselves—a Divine Theocracy, distinguished in this, as in other things, from all the surrounding nations ; so that they might, in a peculiar sense, say, “ The Lord is our Judge ; the Lord is our Lawgiver ; the Lord is our King : he will save us.” (Isa. xxxiii. 22.)

The Ceremonial Law was only the Gospel in figure and enigma ; representing in its various officers, offices, ceremonies, and services, every glory of the person, and every part of the offices, works, and blessings, of the Redeemer. Thus the Gospel was preached unto them ; and, being mixed with faith in them that heard it, became the mean of their salvation.

The Moral, or spiritual, Law, was, as it always must be, the copy of the Divine perfections ; holy, just, and good in all its requirements, and the perfect standard of duty. The same as that which to Adam was a covenant of life, but which ceased to be such upon his transgression, when



by sovereign grace the promise of mercy and a better hope in Christ Jesus were introduced. The Jews could not receive it as the covenant of life and salvation, though in their dispensation there appears to be a great mixture of legal motives ; and the Law itself partakes much of the covenant form, and that because these three codes of law together were connected in the covenant of God to Israel, upon obedience to which their national security and glory rested ; so that in this view the Moral Law must be considered as uniting itself with, and forming part of, their judicial code, and that covenant of peculiarity which God made with them as his nation ; and as having relation to their civil state, in which the continuance of outward blessings was promised to the continuance of obedience : legal punishments were denounced upon particular acts of neglect or disobedience, and the destruction of their policy upon the final rejection of his authority. This view alone will clearly elucidate many things in their dispensation, and many declarations of the Prophets, with their proper application to ourselves under the Gospel. The Law never has been delivered to man as a covenant of life since the fall of our first parent, nor ever can be, as such. Christ alone, the great Surety, has fulfilled its demands, and abolished its authority. As, however, in its principle, it demands the love of God with all the heart, and as, in its precepts, it is the standard of absolute perfection in the exercise of this love, it never can in its nature be changed or abrogated ; for perfection admits of no alteration ; it must, therefore, eternally remain to all creatures, according to their several relations, the rule of conduct. This will still more clearly appear in the further prosecution of our present subject. But who was the person from whom the Jewish people received the whole of their dispensation ? No doubt,

The Angel of the Covenant who appeared to Moses in the bush, who went before them in the wilderness, and led them through to Canaan ; who appeared in all his glory upon Mount Sinai when the Law was given, and

demanded their attention as the God of Israel. This, indeed, was the great I AM, Jehovah Aleim. But as he is called the Angel Jehovah, he must be the Second Person, or Jehovah the Word, in whom alone, from the beginning, the Divine glories have been manifested to man; and he is no other than the Lord Christ, and is expressly said in the New-Testament revelation to be the same Person who appeared in flesh as *Immanuel, God with us; our Jesus*. But we may especially consider him,

As bearing this character under the Gospel dispensation. This is called a new dispensation, and a new covenant, under which the old is done away. (2 Cor. iii. 7—11; Heb. viii. 13.) Not that it is new either in the matter of the revelation, in the way of salvation, or in the rule of moral obedience: the method of salvation has been the same from the beginning, and will be invariably the same to the end of time. The Law, the rule of obedience, being absolutely perfect, can admit of no change; but, then, it appears under a new form of administration, with increasing glory and clearness, and with additional motives of obedience. Thus the Apostle calls that a *new commandment*, which, at the same time, he calls an *old one*, when it came enforced by new motives of evangelical light and grace. (1 John ii. 7, 8.) In the Gospel that way of salvation, in which the believer in all ages of the world has walked, is clearly marked out, appearing with the brightest glory. We now discern, not through types, figures, and shadows, but in the plainest declarations and with the fullest evidence of truth, the way to God in Christ Jesus, and how we may walk and please God. Under it, ceremonies and figures are quite abolished by the plain declaration of the Gospel, and the light of facts; and the carnal, burdensome ordinances give way to the simple sacraments of the Christian church.

Of this new dispensation of grace and truth Jesus was the great Introducer; and under it he is the Sovereign Ruler. Thus he is the great and only Lawgiver of the

New-Testament church, who alone has the rightful authority to lay down rules for its conduct, the ordinances of its worship, and sacraments for its observance\*. His institutions alone are absolutely and always binding; others can only be enforced as they promote the good of the church, or as the observance of them is necessary to its unity, tranquillity, and peace; to promote which the general Law of our great Legislator binds all his subjects. With his own institutions, which he confirms by his authority, he connects the promises of his presence and blessing; and in the fulfilment of that promise the observance of them is found pleasant and delightful to his worshipping people.

When the Christian church triumphed over the darkness of heathenism,—when its beautiful order, sacred institutions, simple worship, and holy sacraments, were established on the ruins of the superstitious rites of an idolatrous world,—then he fulfilled the prophetic declaration, “He set judgment in the earth, and the isles waited for his law.” (Isa. xlii. 4.) The simplicity and harmony of the primitive Church justified the wisdom of its Founder. The term church has often since that time been the watchword of ambition and pride; and, properly considered, it may well be found, that this has only been the effect of a spurious Christianity and a false profession, and, in fact, has only afforded a more plausible pretext for designs which the corrupt heart of man had conceived, and determined, at all events, to find some pretence to execute. The principles of Christianity, or even the members of the true church of Christ, unless deceived and led astray by the influence and plausible purposes of false professors, have been unconnected with the plans which ambition has formed, or the

\* This is not meant contrary to Article XX. of our excellent Establishment, which only asserts the right of the church to prescribe in things indifferent; a right which is necessary for the existence of any community. But, as to the rule of faith and practice, and the appointment of the ordinances and sacraments, I refer them to the authority of the great Head of the church, Christ Jesus.



destructive contests it has maintained under its greatly abused name. Peace, order, harmony, and holiness, the glory of God and the benefit of man, are the sure consequences of a close adherence to the doctrines, principles, and institutions of the Christian Lawgiver; and, when again he shall appear, by the more abundant effusion of his Spirit, to set his judgment in the earth, when the isles shall again wait for his law, when the power of Christianity shall be felt, and Christian institutions prevail in their primitive simplicity through the earth, his wisdom, love, and grace in their appointment, shall be every where adored, by a world every where and in every relation experiencing their salutary and happy effects.

But the law of Christ relates not only to the outward regulation of his church, to which all human laws are necessarily restricted, but extend to the regulation of the heart; prescribe the way of our access to God, the conduct which is acceptable in his sight, and the dispositions which qualify for the enjoyment of his blessings.

The two great laws of the Mediator's kingdom are, the *law of faith* and the *law of love*; to which, by the law, or powerful operation of the Spirit of life, he conforms the hearts of his people (Rom. viii. 3); and which he directs by the outward law, or rule of his word. It is the nature of a law to exact obedience by authority, generally as connected with rewards and punishments; and, in Scripture, that is sometimes termed a law which, as an inward principle, has a commanding power and efficacy, as "THE LAW OF SIN," "THE LAW IN OUR MEMBERS," &c., "THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE." Those observations will be found of great importance in understanding the declarations of Scripture.

The *law of faith* is the prescribed rule of the Gospel as to the way of access to God. Of this the Apostle speaks thus: "Where is boasting then? it is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith." (Rom. iii. 27.) This, as the only way of receiving Christ, coming near to God, or enjoying his salvation, is worthy of our

most serious attention. When man first fell from God, *the law of ceremonies* was instituted to discover the way of his return. These were continually increasing, till, under the Jewish dispensation, they formed a distinct code of emblematical truth: but, as being now all fulfilled in the person and work of Christ, these are now altogether done away, and have vanished before the Sun of Righteousness, as the shadows before the rising sun at the light of day.

The *moral law* still remains the same, necessarily unchangeable in its precepts; but, as it denounces the curse upon every transgression, and man is become guilty, it cannot shew to God, nor provide for him, the way of life; its office is only to "*convince of sin*," while it condemns the sinner. This circumstance, indeed, shews it to be in force, and that we are under its obligation, otherwise it could not condemn us, nor discover our sin to us. But, as there can be no life for man under this law, there must be another law as the mean of life, if a sinner ever lives before God: this is, the law of faith, under which we are graciously placed for righteousness and salvation.

"What the (holy and spiritual) law (of moral obedience) saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." (Rom. iii. 19.) While, then, the law condemns, and conscience justifies the sentence, "by the deeds of the law," it is evident, "no flesh living can be justified." (Rom. iii. 20.) The only way of a sinner's approach to God must be that which reveals the righteousness of God in some way without the law (Rom. iii. 21), though in a manner to honour its truth, magnify its holiness, and fulfil its demands. This is alone found in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In him only, therefore, we have pardon, justification, and life.

The satisfactory atonement which he made, the perfect righteousness which he wrought, has alone magnified the law and made it honourable, and thus provided that God should appear "just in justifying the ungodly." This perfect work being wrought by him, for, and in the stead of,

his people, and being accepted of God on their behalf, is the only ground of their salvation; and faith, by accepting and resting upon it, puts at the same time an honour upon his work, and upon the law which it fulfilled. Thus faith is the only mean of accepting and enjoying the benefits of his mediatorial work and office. It is therefore God's appointment and determination, that a sinner shall be justified in this way, and in no other. While he declares, that "there is salvation in no other, neither any other name under heaven whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 10, 11), the way of faith is prescribed and determined as the only way of receiving his blessings. This is his commandment by way of eminence, "That we believe on the name of the Son of God;" "and by him all that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." (xiii. 39.) The irrevocable decree is therefore sealed by the faithfulness of God, "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." The Gospel, therefore, which reveals this way of salvation is called "*the word of faith.*" (Rom. x. 8.) Proper attention to it is "*the hearing of faith.*" (Gal. iii. 2.) The righteousness which is the ground and matter of our justification is called in Scripture "*the righteousness of faith*" (Rom. x. 6), because faith receives and applies it; and the way of salvation is still the "*law of faith,*" because the sinner is engaged to accept of this righteousness by faith only, and the manner of his receiving it is by imputation\*. Thus this law of faith obliges the sinner to acknowledge, that he is justly condemned as a breaker of the holy law of God, while it shews a righteousness suited to its demands, as the only mean of pardon, justification, and life; and leads the sinner to go out of himself to Christ alone by faith for this blessing. And, according to the gracious decree of God in his covenant-engagement of mercy, "He that believeth on the Son of God HATH LIFE." "He that believeth is justified from all things."

\* See Romaine's "Law and Gospel." (Sermon 4.)



He is invited to Christ, interested in him, and a partaker of all he has done in its merit, efficacy, and blessings. This necessarily includes every other hope; for, “if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect, &c.: therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.” (Rom. iv. 14—16.) Thus it is provided that “this righteousness shall be imputed unto us, if we believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” (ver. 24, 25.)

This is a short view of that only law by which, as sinners, we can stand before God; a law originating in grace, and rich with grace, mercy, and blessings to sinners, calculated to lay a sure foundation of hope and joy, while it humbles the sinner, exalts the Saviour, and secures the blessings of salvation to every believing penitent. This is the doctrine of Scripture, and the great doctrine upon which our church is founded. May the consideration tend to humble our spirits, to submit to the righteousness which is by faith; and may the Holy Spirit give us grace thus to believe, that we may honour Jesus by receiving and rejoicing in him and his complete salvation!

Our great Lawgiver inscribes also upon the hearts of his people, by his Spirit,

*The Law of Love.* This is that law which was written upon the heart of Adam in paradise, and which, operating as an inward principle of perfect obedience, rendered needless any outwardly written record of the will of his God. This is the principle which man lost by the fall, and which is restored in the regeneration of his heart by the Holy Spirit. Then the love of God again possesses his affections, and restores an obedient spirit, ready to delight in and obey his will. This is called the “writing the law in the heart,” and is the great promise of the Saviour under the Gospel dispensation. (Jer. xxxi. 33, &c.; Heb. viii. 16.) This “love is the fulfilling of the law:” it is “the end of the commandment out of a pure heart, and a good

conscience, and faith unfeigned." (1 Tim. i. 5.) When the law of faith has discovered the means of reconciliation with an offended God, and the way of salvation for a perishing sinner; when the grace of *faith* has enabled the sinner to submit to the *righteousness of faith* as his only hope, and the exercise of faith has brought the sweet enjoyment of the Saviour's blessings; the heart reconciled to God beholds his glories and his grace with admiration and love. The more the Spirit of adoption testifies of his love to the heart, the more powerful does the principle of love spring up, and exercise itself towards God, beholding him as in Christ Jesus: while in his own perfections he appears infinitely glorious, the experience of his love in the heart has a commanding and constraining effect. "We have known and believed," saith the admiring soul, "the love which God hath towards us: God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him, &c. We love him because he first loved us." (1 John iv. 16—19.) Where God is thus loved, his law, his people, every thing that relates to his glory, will engage the affections, and excite the ardent desire of the mind.

O, blessed Redeemer! write thy law of love in our hearts; the best directory, and the most effectual principle of obedience and duty.

This is called a law, because (as before alluded to) it has the power and authority of a law in the heart, where it is implanted. But, however it might be to Adam in his perfection, it is not at present so engraven in the hearts of his people, but that it needs the assistance of a written directory to guide its exercise: hence the Redeemer, in the character of the Lawgiver, and in the greatness of his grace, has given us

A written Law, in the records, the precepts, the directions of his word. Some little difficulty has been introduced into this subject by refiners in Christianity, who, under the idea of magnifying the grace of God, seem desirous of excluding the very word Law from the Christian vocabulary, though "the Law in every respect is good, if a

man use it lawfully." Hence a dispute has arisen, whether, in speaking of the rule of a believer's life, we must refer it to that which is properly called the Law of God, or the Moral Law of Ten Commandments, delivered by Moses, or to the preceptive parts of the Gospel, or to the example of Christ, or to the whole word of God. The objection to the term Law has no doubt originated from always retaining, with the term, the idea of a covenant, connected with promises of life to obedience, and the threatening of death to every transgression. This, we have before observed, is not necessary; nor is it the most usual or exact scriptural idea of the term, which more frequently implies simply a rule and directory. It is agreed on all hands, that the Law is no longer the covenant of life, upon which we are to stand for acceptance before God; that all legal motives and claims of merit are entirely done away. But, when the love of God is implanted in the heart of a justified, accepted, and believing sinner, the question must arise, How shall this love discover itself in a way which is pleasing to God? What is the *external rule* by which this *internal principle* must be regulated? Where is the direction which God has given us for this purpose? I see no safer, nor plainer, way of answering the question, than that which has been common in the church of God from the beginning, to reply, that *the Law of God is the rule of a believer's conduct*. In doing this we follow the footsteps of the flock, the example of the wisest and the best believers in the church of Christ. Indeed in this view, considering the Law as divested of its covenant form, and alluding only to its directive precept, there appears to be no difference in this various application. For what is the example of Christ, but the perfect fulfilment, the living copy, of the Law? What are the preceptive parts of the Gospel, but the Law evangelized; the Gospel view of the same duties, which as to matter and form the Law prescribes? What is the whole word of God, but the Law amplified and explained? At least it must contain it as a part of that whole. And what is the Moral Law, but the epitome of that whole



word? Since, then, we are not speaking of the ground and motive of obedience, it is evident, that the substance, the form, and the rule, of duty to a creature, must always be the same. If we were to compare, distinctly, every commandment of the Law, with the declarations of the New Testament, we should discern that every precept is there delivered again in an evangelical form, and sometimes even in the same words, and enforced by the same considerations: witness the five commandments in Eph. vi. 1—3. If we consider also the precepts of the Gospel, we shall perceive that they are included either in the letter, or at least in the spirit, of the Ten Commandments of the Moral Law. The Apostles, therefore, seem to have been ignorant of these nice distinctions; for, if the Gospel precepts can be proved to be in substance the same as the Law of the Ten Commandments, and that it is there again delivered and enforced, though not in the exact form, it is surely most absurd to make it a matter of controversy, whether we shall read our rule of duty in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, in the Old Testament, or in the Gospels and Epistles in the New. It is surely as much a vain jangling about the Law, as that which the Apostle condemns; the guilt of which must rest upon those who have introduced the troublesome novelty.

Whenever, therefore, this view of the Law as the rule of life, gives distress to the mind, as it is said by such to do, or introduces legal fears to the dishonour of Christ, and the destruction of the believer's peace, it arises from secretly reverting to it as the covenant of life, and considering our obedience to it as the ground of our acceptance with God; though such fears may sometimes arise from a consciousness of general insincerity in the Christian profession, in which case they ought rather to be cherished till they have wrought a due conviction of guilt, and brought us penitent and believing to the Lord Jesus Christ, than to be checked as improper and needless. But if these fears arise from the consideration of the Law as a rule of conduct, it must be from misrepresentation: the

same fears would arise from the establishment of any rule, to those that remain ignorant, through the self-righteous spirit of the natural heart. The example of Christ, or the Gospel precept, would have the very same effect as the commandment of the Law: yet no one will venture to affirm, that the believer is without rule. "Not without law to God," says the Apostle, "but under the Law to Christ." The Law, it is allowed, can do nothing for us, as to quickening the mind to obedience; nor, indeed, can the Gospel precept, as it is an outwardly written commandment. The Apostle styles it, equally as the Law, "the killing letter." (2 Cor. iii. 6.) We must not, however, confound the inward efficacy, with the outward direction, the vital principle with that which guides its exercises in the outward conduct\*.

But while the rule, and therefore the matter, of duty is the same under every dispensation, there are many and very important distinctions to be observed. Under the Gospel, the cause, the principle, the motive, and the end, of Christian obedience, are essentially different.

*The cause* is,—not the remainder of that original principle which was in the heart of upright man, but,—the regenerating influence of the Spirit of Christ, the gift of the exalted Redeemer, as the effect of his finished redemption, and the indwelling power of his grace renovating the heart. *The principle* is, the law of love, written on the heart by that same Spirit, from whence the believer obeys not *for* pardon and justification and salvation, but, as *being pardoned and justified* by faith in Christ Jesus, as experiencing the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, and earnestly desirous of living to the praise and honour of him whose grace hath brought salvation. *The motives* of evangelical obedience all arise from the same source; a believing view of the purposes and designs of the everlasting covenant of redemption, the wonderful undertaking of the Mediator, his condescension for the

\* See Romaine's Sermon on the Law and Gospel.

salvation of his people, the fulness of his atonement, the perfection of his righteousness, the completeness of his work, the all-sufficiency of grace and blessing treasured up in him, the faithfulness of his promise, and the glory that is to be revealed at his appearance and coming. By this view the Gospel precepts are enforced, and by this consideration they become effectual in the hearts of his people. “Do this in remembrance of me,” recommends every Gospel precept. The obedience of the believer is the obedience of faith working love, and, by love: it is love following the directions of the object beloved. The persons to whom the Law is addressed as a rule of life are already believers, justified in Christ Jesus, accepted of God, and partakers of his salvation; who, therefore, aim to regulate their conduct according to its precepts, influenced by the motives of Gospel grace. And the *end* of all Christian obedience is, the glory of God our Saviour in all things, the honour of his name, the success of his cause, the promotion of his interest in the world, and the eternal enjoyment of himself in glory. Thus, while the condescending Redeemer reveals his law, though every precept proves our guilt, and condemns us as transgressors, yet revealing his grace as our Law-fulfiller, the believer flies to him and rejoices daily in pardoning mercy. He knows that the Law has no more power as a covenant of life; that it has no more power to condemn a believer in Jesus; he sees it, therefore, divested of all its terror, and, as “holy and just and good,” “*he delights*” in its precepts “after the inward man.” While the Law is thus again written in his heart, he loves the Lord, his will and way; he studies to know more of it, and to be more conformed to it, till he stands complete in glory.

Jesus, having abolished the sentence and the curse by his obedience and atonement, presents it again to us; we receive it from his hands the same in substance, but in a new form, as the rule of love, and as different in the nature of its obligations and its effects, as the covenant of the Law and the covenant of Gospel grace and salvation.



It becomes a part of that new covenant in which grace is prepared to incline the believer to obedience, and enable him as a saved sinner to delight in, and observe, its precepts to his glory.

The Lord Jesus also, as a Lawgiver, has his rewards and punishments, with which he exercises his people; nor will the Divine Redeemer suffer his law to be neglected among his subjects, nor the disobedience of his own people to go unpunished: he has his various suitable corrections with which to bring his people to a knowledge of their wickedness, and turn them back to him, as well as the power to destroy, at last, all the finally disobedient. In the end he shall come to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will not, indeed, cast off his people, because he will put his fear into their hearts that they shall not finally depart from him; but let them reverence his character, in this respect, or carelessness and disobedience will be recompensed with the domestic chastisements of his family, the scourges of his paternal rod, or the just award of the righteous Lawgiver. (Psa. lxxxix. 32.)

These are the laws of the Redeemer's kingdom, sanctified by his authority, and requiring our submission and obedience. If ever we come near to God, it must be in the way of faith, believing in the atoning blood and righteousness of the Surety, and living upon him by faith for all. If ever we enter into his kingdom, our hearts must partake of his regenerating grace, and when the power of love is operating there, the obedience of love will appear in the life and conduct. To these views he brings his people by the power and teaching of his Spirit. A due conviction of the guilt and curse of sin, discovers the impossibility of any self-wrought salvation, and commends the glory and all-sufficiency of the Saviour to the humble penitent. Thus brought to submit to *the righteousness which is by faith*, he trusts alone his all-sufficient fulness, and rests upon his promise for pardon, life, and glory. Thus obedient to the law of faith Christ is his All and in all, all his salvation,

and all his desire.—My fellow-sinners, every other dependence, however plausible to carnal reason and the pride of man, while it is contrary to the appointment of God, will but deceive your expectation, and leave you destitute of that righteousness in which alone you can appear before a holy God. To this law you must submit, or never hope to stand in the Redeemer's kingdom, or enjoy its privileges and glories. But while the grace of the Spirit discovers to the believing sinner his former state of darkness, alienation, and guilt, opens the love of the everlasting covenant, the purposes of grace, the work of Christ, and the blessings of his salvation; while it brings into experience the enjoyment of these blessings, and points to the hope of their future and complete enjoyment; the heart of the believer is conformed to the law of love. "*What wilt thou have me to do?*" is the language of grace in the renewed affections: How shall I glorify my Saviour? is the constant inquiry of the saved sinner.

Thus he "WAITS FOR THE LAW" of the Redeemer, with desire to know his will, with readiness to receive his direction, and willingness to submit and obey. He waits to know, that he may do, it, and, when it stands revealed to him in the written word, he delights in obedience to all the will of God, notwithstanding the opposition of a corrupted nature, and the body of sin and death. He feels the powerful influence of those gracious motives by which the precept is evangelically enforced. It is, says he, the command of my God and Father in Christ Jesus; yea, the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, that friend of sinners who laid down his life for my salvation, who bare my sins in his own body on the tree, and took them all away; who wrought out an everlasting righteousness, and brought me near to God; who has quickened me by his grace, so that I now live to God, and look forward with the assured prospect of everlasting life and glory in and through him. He has a right to command; but his authority is tempered with grace, and confirmed by every obli-

gation of love and gratitude. Let my heart melt into loving obedience, since we are not our own, but bought with a price, that we may glorify God with our bodies and spirits which are his. (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.) Our obedience, indeed, is not the ground of our acceptance, otherwise we might well be fearful and discouraged; but, as already accepted in the Beloved, we obey "not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the spirit," and rejoice to glorify our God and Saviour.

Here, then, let us attend to the additional proof of the Divine power and glory of the Lord Jesus. The only binding authority to creatures is, the will of God; nothing else can lay us under obligation, demand our obedience, or denounce on disobedience the just punishment of guilt. There is but one Lawgiver, who "is able to save and to destroy." (James iv. 12.) The great Lawgiver of his church must therefore be its Lord and Ruler, and possess that sovereign authority which can belong to none but Jehovah their God.

But Jesus is the Lawgiver of universal nature, and of his church. He alone has prescribed the law of order to the one, and the law of life and the law of obedience to the other. And soon he shall come to dissolve the fabric of nature which he has formed, and shall vindicate his own power and truth in the doctrine of his word.

If, then, our hearts are not conformed to his revealed will, he will show himself Almighty to punish, and to vindicate the laws which he has given. "He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them which believe;" but, "to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ."

O Spirit of Jesus, let thy grace humble our hearts, and teach us to submit to thy revealed way of salvation, bringing down every thought to the obedience of righteousness! Let that law of love be written in our hearts, which shall secure our willing obedience to thy precepts! then, reckoning ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto



God through Jesus Christ our Lord, we shall no longer yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield ourselves unto God as those which are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Sin shall no more have dominion over us, while we are not under the law, but under grace. (Rom. vi. 11—14.)

Thus shall we esteem all thy commandments in all things to be right, submit to thine authority and direction in all things, and by willing, universal obedience, glorify the Saviour as—the Lawgiver of his church.

## ESSAY V.

**Pearl of great Price.**

THIS is one of those beautiful allusions which represent the excellencies and glories of the Lord Jesus, and the invaluable benefits which he bestows upon his people, by a reference to one of those objects in which man naturally seeks his rest and his felicity. “While,” says the great Teacher of his church, “you are pursuing after riches, while laying up the costly pearls, or much valued precious stones, with the greatest care, and depositing them for safety in the recesses of the cabinet; behold, I point you to one which is of inestimable value, whose price is far above rubies: in the acquisition of which, were a man to give for it all that he hath, he would be an infinite gainer.” This Pearl, the Spirit of wisdom, in his word, has discovered to us, in all its genuine excellencies, that we may be induced to seek after it, and to receive and treasure it up in our hearts, as our true riches, our honour, our glory, and our joy. (Read Prov. iii. 13—18, and viii. 11—21; Job xxviii. 12—28.)

All the blessings of the Gospel are, in their true value, worthy the dignity of the infinite Giver; and suited to the nature and capacities of that immortal spirit in man, for the exalting and glorifying of which they are designed. Earthly blessings, which are in their nature transitory, and suited only to the state of a dying body, can bear no comparison with these, and ought not to excite one hesitating thought when placed in competition with them. It is the ignorance and carnality of man, which leads him to undervalue the most excellent, and to prefer the most empty;—

a carnality arising from the depravity of his nature, an ignorance which, arising also from the same cause, obscures and confounds all just apprehensions of God, all right views of his own nature, the state in which he is now placed, the happiness for which he was formed, and the corrupt and polluting influence, and ultimate consequences, of the things by which he is surrounded.

The man whose mind is enlightened by the teaching of the Spirit, in the kingdom of grace, is compared by our Lord, to a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls. These, no doubt, are, the general privileges and blessings of the covenant of grace, revealed in the “word of the truth of the Gospel.” Pardon, the righteousness of faith, justification, adoption, all the gifts of grace, are, indeed, pearls of great value. But, in prosecuting this diligent research, he finds, that all these are summed up in Christ Jesus, the one all-sufficient Saviour. His excellency comprehends the whole; in him they all centre; from him they are diffused; in him all their glories are deposited; he that possesses Christ possesses them all. He, then, is *THE Pearl, by way of eminence—the Pearl of great price*; the possession of which will make up for the want of all beside, and fully satisfy the happy possessor through eternity.

There are certain qualities in the pearl, which might lead our heavenly Teacher to select it from other precious things, as the emblem of his own glory and blessings. These, though very inadequate, (as must always be the case in the comparison of earthly and heavenly glories,) may be worthy of our consideration, as aiding the feeble conceptions of our finite minds.

Those pearls are accounted the best which are *pure, clear, and transparent*. “Pearls ought to be in colour a pure white, and that, not dead and lifeless, but clear and brilliant; perfect, free from foulness, spot, or stain.” “Their surface must be naturally smooth and glossy. They bring their natural polish with them, which art is not able to improve.” (See *Encycl. Brit.*) And do they not herein form an admirable representation of the underived and



resplendent glories of the Lord Jesus? The infinite perfections of his Divine nature, the unspotted holiness, and moral excellency, of his human nature, the absolute purity and righteousness of his Mediatorial character, are here truly, though very inadequately, shadowed forth. As *GOD*, *self-existent*, his perfections are underived; as *Man* and as *Mediator*, his glories are clear and illustrious, his character without blemish or defect: "He came to take away sin," and "in him is no sin."

As *GOD*, he sits upon the throne of his glory, acknowledged as the Creator of all things, visible or invisible, thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers. He charges even those pure orders of intelligence with comparative folly, and the heavens are not clean in his sight. Before him they bow down, prostrating themselves in that solemn adoration which the Prophet was once favoured in vision to behold, and which, the Apostle tells us, was the manifestation of the glory of Jesus; "crying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts," &c.

As *man*, his human nature had none of its defilement. Conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, and born without the stain of original pollution, he appeared as "the holy child Jesus." And being without sin in his nature, he was without sin in his conduct; "the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot:" "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

As *Mediator*, his person unites the natures both of God and man, in which he bears a character which never could have been borne by any other, and discharges an office which none other could have held or executed, and performs works which never could have been performed by any but himself, which complete his suitableness for all the purposes of his appointment. His atonement has an infinite virtue; his righteousness is absolutely perfect and everlasting, all-sufficient for the demands of the Law, the satisfaction of Divine justice, and the honour of the government of God; and his work of redemption is "*finished*" and complete. In this character he has "fulfilled all

righteousness ;” the effect of which is, the acceptance of his person and his work, and the delivery into his hands of the gifts and graces suited to carry on the designs and purposes of his Mediatorial kingdom. Hence the blessings treasured up in the heart, and bestowed from the hand, of the Redeemer, are all-sufficient for the wants of believing sinners; for pardon, peace, justification, sanctification, preservation, and eternal glory. When considered and viewed by faith, in all these respects how pure and holy does the Lord Jesus appear in his character! how resplendent his glories! how precious in his Mediatorial gifts and blessings! Who, that values any thing, would not put an inestimable value on him? So *will* all, who are enlightened to behold his beauties; to discern his excellencies; to know truly *what*, and how glorious, he is; and especially they who taste his grace, and hope hereafter to enjoy his glory.

A pearl is naturally very *hard* and *durable*. This marks out the unchangeableness and perpetuity of his nature and his blessings. Jesus is “He which is, and which was, and which is to come,” “the Alpha and Omega;” from everlasting to everlasting. In his Mediatorial character and office he “*ever liveth*,” that he may save to the uttermost. He is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;” and like himself are the blessings which he bestows. The privileges, and the honours of his kingdom, are not subject to the changes of nature or the vicissitudes of time. The caprice of men, the smiles or frowns of fortune, (as it is unreasonably called,) the accidents of a frail body, or the inevitable flight of time, materially affect, yea, entirely destroy, the honours and happiness of the world, but not the honour which cometh of God. While “in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” while “in him all fulness dwells, that out of it we may receive, and grace for grace,” his riches are those which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through to steal; which no accident can injure, and no time destroy. His *love*, the origin, and in itself the greatest, of all blessings, can never be stolen away, wear out, nor change, and there-

fore his blessings are secure and unalienable. "The glory," says the great Intercessor, "which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me," &c. "Father, I will, that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold that glory which thou hast given me." (John xvii. 22—24.) Soon this world, and all that is therein, shall be burnt up. The hardest diamond, or the most durable pearl of greatest value, shall not escape nor survive the ravages of the great and general conflagration; but then the glories of *this Pearl of great price* shall remain the same, and secure to its happy possessors the same blessings. Like gold tried in the fire, it shall only come forth more refined and more brilliant; and shall "be found to praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Large pearls, as they are *scarce*, are therefore of the greatest value; and this is the chief design of the allusion, to exhibit the *peculiar and inestimable value* of the Redeemer *before God*, and *to his people* \*. The love of the three Persons, in the Godhead, towards each other, is a subject as far beyond our comprehension as the Godhead itself; and yet we may with humiliation suppose, that as the perfect blessedness of Deity must consist in the contemplation of its own perfections and glories, so the union and communion of the ever-blessed Persons between themselves must form no inconsiderable part of their consummate and absolute felicity. The descriptions, however, which are given to us of the love of the Father and the Son in the Scriptures, appear rather to relate to the

\* Pliny says, that pearls are the most valuable and excellent of all precious stones; and from our Saviour's comparing the kingdom of heaven to a pearl, it would seem that they were really held in such high estimation at that time. Mr. Bruce, however, is of opinion, that this extraordinary value was put only upon the *very large kind*; of which we are told Servilia, the mother of Marcus Brutus, presented one to Cæsar, of the value of 50,000*l.* of our money. And Cleopatra dissolved one worth 250,000*l.* in vinegar, which she drank at supper with Mark Anthony.—*Encyclopædia Britannica.*



exaltation of the Second Person from everlasting as the Head both of Creation and Redemption, and the perfect delight which the Father takes in him in this character; which is more suited for our edification and comfort, than to gratify a vain curiosity. It is, perhaps, said in this sense peculiarly, that “He is *in* the Father, and the Father in him,” communicating his glory to him: so the union of the Father and the Son, and the glory which he thereby receives, are made the standard of the union between Christ and his church, and of the glory which he communicates to them. (John xvii. 21—24.)

Under the character of the *Essential Wisdom*, he thus declares the everlasting love of the Father to him: “The Lord (Jehovah) possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was,” &c. “Then I was by him as one brought up with him, and I was *daily his delight*, rejoicing always before him.” (Prov. viii. 22—31.) He is styled, therefore, by the Prophet, the Chosen, the Elect of God, and Precious; his Servant whom he upholds, his Elect in whom his soul delighteth. (Isa. xxviii. 16; compare 1 Pet. ii. 4, and Isa. xlii. 1, &c.) In other Prophets he bears the very name of *the Beloved*. (Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24; and Hos. iii. 5\*.) The testimony, then, which was borne at the baptism of Jesus was but a solemn and public attestation to the same truth, which runs through the preceding revelation of God; when the voice from heaven declared, “Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:” (i. e.) in whose person I find infinite delight; in whose work I rest with perfect satisfaction; and in whose salvation I completely acquiesce; rejoicing in the success of every step in his mediatorial undertaking, till he shall bring all his redeemed to behold and enjoy his glory.

Thus chosen of God, He is pointed out to us as the only way to God; he is laid as the only foundation for our

\* So it ought certainly to be rendered, as David had long since been dead, and no one ever entertained the expectation of his rising again to be the Ruler of the people of Israel.—(Compare Acts ii. 34—36.)

hopes; and he is set forth as the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption of his people. It was well pleasing not to the Father only (for this term is not in the original), but in the counsels of eternity between the eternal Three in Jehovah, that “*in him*,” and in him alone, “should *all* (mediatorial) fulness dwell.” He is, therefore, rightly presented to us in the Scriptures, as the only ground of our dependence, and the supreme object of our love. And surely he whom God has chosen, must be most suitable to the purpose for which he is chosen; and he upon whom God has put such honour, must be worthy of all the honour which he can receive from us.

When the eye of faith is opened in the soul, and the rays of Divine light shine around, the first object which attracts the attention is, the glory of Jesus. The suitability of his Person for the wonderful works of his mediatorial undertaking, the suitability of his character and offices to the situation of guilty transgressors, and the suitability of his benefits and gifts to the wants of sinners, render him to the believing mind the object of delight. A growing discovery of their indigence and necessity, and of his corresponding fulness of suitable supply, together with his designs and purposes of grace, which insure his willingness to bestow, render him increasingly precious to his people. And the more they view him by faith, as God has presented him to them in his word, the more they are convinced, that he deserves all their confidence, their supreme estimation, and their zealous services.

The Apostle appeals to the Corinthians, that “they *knew* the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was (infinitely) rich (in all the names, attributes, works and worship, of Jehovah), for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.” Of him, therefore, it may be eminently said, “As poor, yet making many rich.” Divesting himself of his Divine glories, he assumed a character, in which he might be able to enrich his people with grace and glory. Unrobing himself, that he might clothe them—emptying himself, that he might fill them—bearing

and suffering all things, that they might enjoy all things in him. Let the believer, then, be as poor as his Master was on earth, without, not only a pearl of value, but, the common conveniences of life, yet has he Christ in his heart, the unspeakable gift of God; yet he possesses the unsearchable riches of Christ, in whom "*all things are his.*" In his character he is more honourable, in his titles he is more glorious, in his possessions he is richer, in his hopes he is happier, than the mightiest monarch, who makes the earth to tremble, who divides kingdoms, and calls them all proudly, but vainly, his own.

But that which ought to fix upon our minds an abiding practical conviction of the value of Christ, is, his exclusive suitableness and ability to remedy the evils of life, and supply the sources of true felicity to man. Without him the highest cannot be happy; with him the meanest, and those in outward circumstances justly styled the most miserable, have triumphed, with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. The accumulation of riches may still leave a man miserable. Pillars of marble, and rooms of state often echo to the groans of inward anguish; and beds of down are watered with the tears of unavailing sorrow. But granting to their possessors all the enjoyments which they seem to promise, soon the transitory bliss is over and gone. But the attainment of Christ, by faith, is a full and ceaseless source of joy and consolation now; and the happy believer, interested in him, shall never lose his love, never be deprived of his grace, nor disappointed in the hope of his blessings! Surely, then, this Jesus is "*the Pearl of great price!*"

But, alas! "the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light." While crying, "Who will shew us any good?" they pursue, with ardour and perseverance, the *good* they wish, the good presented to them on earth. The merchant will study to be acquainted with every means of acquiring that of which he is in pursuit. He will encounter the perils of the seas, the dangers of various climates, the toil of constant



exertion, and will go from shore to shore to obtain some perishing commodity, labouring as though in search of eternal substance; while the Christian pursues eternal things with a coldness and indifference, as though they were perishing vanities. Earnestly should we wait in the way of his appointments, in the ordinances of his house, for his presence and blessing; and, like the poor cripple at the pool of Bethesda, though we wait long we shall not wait in vain: at length the Saviour shall pass by, and his word of power be our deliverance and our joy. Surely he is worthy to be sought for as silver, and dug for as for hid treasures. The view of Christ which faith presents to the mind from the word of God, discovers him as infinitely suitable to the case and wants of sinners; infinitely precious to the immortal mind in his eternal benefits. Without him we are poor indeed; poor in our souls, in a state of spiritual poverty before God, and shall be poor for an eternal world. In him alone are riches, true and everlasting! The knowledge of his person, the discovery of his glories, the communications of his love, the enjoyment of his blessings, together with some conformity of mind to his image and to his will, will always render him highly estimable in the view of the believer; and he who knows the most of these, and enjoys the most of them in his heart, will be most impressed with their value—will be most earnest in their pursuit, most diligent and persevering in the means of their attainment.

To be brought to see the Redeemer in this light, to have the enjoyment of him in all his blessings, to know how to bring these views and privileges more and more into experience, to glorify him by believing, and by believing to enjoy him in the heart,—are the great points of experimental and practical Christianity, the great means of Christian holiness and consolation. Here the generality of professing Christians, as well as the world at large, stand seriously reprov'd for their mistaken views and conduct. Weak faith sees but little of the glory and preciousness of Him who is the altogether Lovely, and suffers the minds even

of real believers to rest far short of that holy ardour and animated zeal in pursuit, which his infinite excellencies deserve, and which would be more to the honour of his Name and their own true felicity. The mere shadow and the empty name of faith which many possess, seems to be compatible with the utmost carelessness and indifference to the glory of the Redeemer, and the inward participation of his blessings. The world at large, covetous of earthly riches, ambitious of earthly honours, are ignorant of the value, and unconcerned as to the enjoyment, of Him in whom are hid all the treasures and riches of saving grace. The multitude, who are enslaved to their lusts and passions, can find no joy in his presence, nor taste the sweets of spiritual blessings. And it is too evident to be denied, that men may be wise and learned in all the subjects of knowledge that the world affords, and yet be destitute of *“the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.”* The Apostle has traced up for us this evil to its origin, and shewn how it arises from the depravity of the heart of man, and the delusions of the enemy working *by* and *upon* it: “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor. ii. 14; comp. ver. 12, &c.) The power and artifice of the enemy of souls, uniting with, and working upon, this corruption, “blind the eyes of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.) Hence the world prefer (as in the fable) the worthless grain upon the dunghill to the most precious jewel, because more suited to the corrupt propensities and appetites of an earthly nature. And the great enemy of God and man, with unwearied assiduity and lamentable success, endeavours to deceive mankind; and so awfully succeeds, that they see no valuable excellency where all excellencies centre, and fancy that there alone all excellencies are to be found where there is none.

The *scarcity*, and almost uniqueness, of such gems or

pearls, represents (as is no doubt the principal design of the allusion) the *exclusive glory and excellency of the Lord Jesus*.

In the Gospel there is but *one* Saviour, which shines, alone and all-sufficient, “the Pearl of great price,” the only Name under heaven; in whom alone is salvation. There is but one Jesus, but one Immanuel, one Redeemer and Friend of his Church; but he is, equal, shall we say, to all created excellency? yea rather, infinitely beyond them all, and more worthy of our admiration, love, and delight, than all of them together! This Pearl is found only in the Gospel, through the mercy of our God, by faith: and happy is he that findeth it! for “the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold: it is more precious than rubies (or pearls): and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto it.” (Prov. iii. 14, 15.) It is thy felicity, O needy sinner, not to be distracted by many directions, but to be pointed to one only object as the hope of pardon and salvation, to be received in one faith, for thy sure deliverance from all sin and evil. The mercy of God has provided and directed thee to this only Saviour, and faith alone secures the possession and enjoyment of Him. How infinitely, then, to be prized is He! To possess Christ is to be rich in pardon, rich in the Divine favour, rich in grace and peace, rich in consolation, rich in all the hopes which an immortal soul can entertain, with an assurance of being soon enriched with boundless and eternal glory! The revelation of this in the Gospel made the Apostle glory in it, and every believer joins his language: “I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.” And why? “Because it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,” &c. “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.” There the righteousness of the Redeemer and his unsearchable riches are manifested, which made the Apostle account “all things but loss,” yea, “but dross and dung,” in comparison of “the excellency of the knowledge of



Christ Jesus.” He stands unrivalled in creation, and is above all the round of imaginable excellencies and perfections. He is the unrivalled object of revelation, and ought to stand unrivalled in the affections of his people.

This allusion affords some faint comparison with his glories, but falls infinitely beneath them,—as far as earthly glories fall short of heavenly, as temporal things are beneath eternal. And yet, when we see and feel our need, discover his preciousness, and seek in faith for the enjoyment of his blessings, (all glory be to the grace and truth of God!) however unworthy we are, however glorious these gifts and benefits, they all become ours!

What, then, are our dispositions with respect to this Divine, this only Saviour? If we are really found in him, if actually experiencing his grace and power, *we* have indeed been taught to esteem him above all beside, the “chief among ten thousand.” And the longer and more intimate our knowledge of him is, the more shall we discern his suitableness, his glory, and the unspeakable value of the gifts which he bestows. So Abraham, the friend of God, *persuaded of* and *embracing* the promises, declared himself a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, and endured to the end in hope of his better kingdom above. So Moses, surrounded with all the honours of the Egyptian court, “accounted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.” How different from him, who—after inquiring of the Redeemer in person, “What good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?” riveted to earth by the prevailing love of its riches and possessions—went away sorrowful, and turned his back upon the Saviour and his glorious salvation! This, however, is the example which is the subject of general imitation. The unhappily blinded sinner, deluded by the fascinating charms of a deceitful world, pays him perhaps the compliment of some slight inquiry into his doctrine, or a careless profession of his Name; but practically prefers the world, either in its business, its pleasures, its honours, or its polluting lusts,

to the Saviour and his blessings; nor feels towards him or them that devoted attachment or supreme affection which he deserves and demands. If, however, we entertain a proper sense of our state and condition as sinners, and of his glories as the appointed and suitable Mediator, all other dependencies will necessarily be forsaken; no other foundation will support our hope; and whatever stands in the way as an impediment to our acceptance of Him, and submission to his authority, our lusts and passions, or the pleasures of the world, will cheerfully be resigned. There can be no knowledge of his glory, unless it rise above all beside in our affections. Thus he himself has determined: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me," &c. "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." (Matt. x. 37, 38.) And he "that forsaketh not all that he hath" (i. e. which is incompatible with my service and love), "cannot be my disciple." (Luke xiv. 33.)

What think we, then, of Christ? Is he to us the "Pearl of great price?" It is the office and work of the Spirit of Christ to testify of him, and to exalt him in the judgment, the heart, the affections, and the conduct, of his people. All who are partakers of the same Spirit, are taught in their measure the same lesson. (See Acts xxi. 13.) May we thus be induced to value above all this invaluable gift! The value of other things is but arbitrary, and dependent on the caprice of men. Not so the Lord Jesus. He is glorious in the sight of God, and must be so to all who know him. In his *person* what glories and excellencies does he not possess? In his *work*, what has he not done? In his *offices*, what will he not do? In his *blessings*, what has he not to bestow upon his people? But remember, if they are not *now* obtained, they are lost for ever, and soon the time for their pursuit will be irrevocably gone. Now he appears as the *gracious Saviour*; soon he will appear to those who have not honoured him in the dependence of faith, and willing submission to him in that character, as the *righteous Judge*. In that day of wrath mercy shall be



unknown, and will then be sought too late. Now “Wisdom crieth aloud, and uttereth her voice in the streets,” &c. Now the Gospel trumpet proclaims, “Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,” &c. “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.” His own voice is echoed in the ministry of his word: “Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Oh, hear, sinners, and your souls shall live!

Thrice happy he who hath fled by faith to this Saviour, and who possesses him and holds him in his heart, and with him assuredly all the blessings of his salvation. You have obtained that, my Christian brother, which is the most necessary, the most valuable acquisition. If possessing Christ, you may do well without ten thousand other things, which are highly esteemed among men, and diligently sought after by them. But, destitute of the knowledge of Christ, all other knowledge will be folly: destitute of the enjoyment of Christ, the possession of the ten thousand times ten thousand things, which men set their hearts upon, and which with diversified cares and painful anxieties they are seeking after, will leave you miserable. If in possession of Christ, you have got that Pearl which will be valuable in an eternal world; which makes you truly rich, rich towards God, rich for eternity; that one pearl which is infinitely more precious than all the gems of the universe. Oh, then, be careless, comparatively careless, as to the loss of all other treasures, but faithfully guard and preserve this in the possession of your heart. There lay it up where no power nor artifice shall deprive you of it; and seek his grace, and trust his promise, to keep you in the possession. Whenever he gives himself, he gives himself for ever; and whenever he takes his people to himself, his covenant engagements secure them to him, that “they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of his hands.”

Earthly riches and possessions give a dignity and honour to those who attain them. Men assume, in general, an



importance and authority from them, which by general consent is yielded to their possessors; but soon their influence, and all their consequence will be over, and those only be advanced to eternal honours who are rich in Christ Jesus. "This honour have all his saints;" an honour arising from sovereign grace, bestowed as the free gift of God in Christ, and permanent as that upon which it rests: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

O thou blessed Jesus, so rich in thyself, so ready to communicate, so infinite in, thy blessings, we are thine; we long to possess thee, for in thee we shall possess all. Though poor, miserable, and dying sinners in ourselves, none of these things shall distress us, none of these things can hurt or injure us, if thou art our Friend and Saviour. Rich in thy love, we will look forward to eternal blessings, worthy of thy dignity, worthy of the perfection and infinite merit of thy work, and of our high relation to Thee! We would highly value thee, thou invaluable Treasure; we would love thee, honour and glorify thee more, and treasure thee up in our hearts, as exclusively, in our esteem, *the Pearl of great price!*

## ESSAY VI.

## Redeemer.

WHEN those humane and strenuous efforts were crowned with success, which had for their end the abolition of that infamous trade in human blood which—originating in injustice, carried on with all the artifice which unprincipled avarice could invent, and terminated in cruelty and oppression—had disgraced all the civilized nations of Europe, it afforded to the philanthropic mind the highest sensible gratification and luxury of feeling.

But who can judge, except those who are placed in such degrading circumstances, what joy it would afford to a company of slaves, already deprived of all the comforts of their native land, galled with the chain, wounded with the scourge, and urged on to oppressive labour, to hear the voice of the deliverer, the proclamation of liberty! There is, however, a bondage more oppressive, a chain more galling, a servitude more dangerous and destructive: “Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.” (2 Pet. ii. 19.) “He that committeth sin is the servant of sin.” (John viii. 34.) But behold the great Redeemer comes, “anointed to preach *liberty to the captive*, the opening of the prison to them which are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,” the jubilee of release. The Gospel trumpet sounding from the sacrifice of the cross, proclaims redemption purchased and obtained, the price paid for the ransom, the conquest finished and secured. “Wilt thou be made free?” Lo! this is the message of that Gospel, which shows also the certainty of the gift to the willing mind. “*Blessed is the*

*people that know the joyful sound;*" that hear its gracious invitation; more blessed they who experience the deliverance, who are brought into the glorious liberty of the Gospel, the earnest of complete deliverance from sin, from guilt, and from every enemy in the kingdom of peace and glory. Then only shall we fully understand the value of redeeming power and love. May my soul and the soul of the reader attain this knowledge, and this liberty, to the glory of the great Deliverer!

The states which require the interposition of a Redeemer are, either a state of *forfeiture* or of *slavery*; and under the Jewish dispensation the avenger of blood was considered as in this relation to a person accidentally slain, who had power to avenge his death upon the murderer\*.

Each of these affords a true representation of the state of man as under sin. By transgression become a rebel, he has *forfeited* his original inheritance, deprived himself of the favour of his offended Sovereign, and the blessings of his kingdom; and, as such, he was driven out from the earthly paradise which was granted to him as his delightful dwelling and proper inheritance, without hope of restoration or return.

Departed from his due allegiance to his rightful Sovereign, he has become, by voluntary surrender, the *slave of sin and satan*. Deceived by his artifices into the most abject submission, while sin reigns in the affections he becomes an easy and willing prey; a situation which the great enemy fails not to use for the securing his captive and holding him in his destructive bonds. Through the gratification felt in his corrupt affections, he is often most insensible when most fatally secured; and is "led captive

\* See Numbers xxxv. The Hebrew term has always a relation to the Kinsman Redeemer in all or in some one or other of his legally appointed offices and duties. לַקָּדֵם is the common name by which the Redeemer and Avenger is expressed. (See Parkhurst on the word.) And the Greek term, to the payment of a price or ransom; λυτρον, the price paid to redeem: hence λυτρω, λυτρωσις, and λυτρωτης a Redeemer, or Deliverer, by price. (See Parkhurst.)



by satan at his will," who is therefore styled "the god of this world, the spirit which worketh in all the children of disobedience." This is really the state of man, though he be ignorant of it, though he loves his bondage, binds faster his own chain, and delights in the destructive servitude to which he is condemned. The tyrannical oppression of Egypt and of Babylon is used frequently in Scripture, by way of allusion, to represent the grievous bondage of the sinner; and the deliverance of Israel from it is to mark out the necessity, the nature, and the blessings, of redemption: and the deliverances of the Israelites from these distressing situations certainly were so conducted, in the wisdom of God, to represent, in a variety of striking particulars, the spiritual deliverance of his people; so much so that, in the evangelical Prophet, both the deliverance from Babylon by Cyrus, and the redemption of Jesus, are prophetically set forth under the same description; the one being considered as the immediate, the other as the more remote and ultimate, but grand and principal, object of the prophecy. (See Isa. xl. and following chapters.) When the eyes of the mind are enlightened, and the darkness of nature's ignorance removed; when the spiritual powers and faculties of the soul are restored by grace, then the sinner begins to perceive his situation. He laments his lost estate, his forfeited inheritance, and "cries out by reason of the oppressor." The Apostle Paul has given us, in the gradual discoveries and workings of his own mind upon and after his conversion, an illustration of this: both of these states are represented in the seventh chapter of Romans, in which the Apostle first describes (ver. 7—13.) the state in which he found himself to be when first the Spirit of light and grace shone in upon his understanding and his heart; and from thence to the end of the chapter what he still found himself to be, though a believer in Christ, and under the power of his grace; expressing those lamentations over the remains of corruption which the believer will ever be compelled to make till his deliverance is perfected in glory.

The Law, impressed upon the conscience by the Divine Spirit, convinced the Apostle of the depraved desires of his corrupt heart, and *wrought in him*, he tells us, all manner of concupiscence (ver. 7, 8); that is, Before this, sin appeared as dead; now he found it to be alive, and himself under the power of spiritual death, and exposed to the sentence of eternal condemnation (9, 10). Hence he appeared to himself as dead in fact, and dead in law (ver. 11): while the excellency of the commandment, in itself *holy, just, and good*, convinced him of his state of sin, and the *exceeding sinfulness of sin* (12, 13), and that, in every view, as in himself, he was nothing but sin and guilt, “carnal, sold under sin” (ver. 14). Still, as a believer, he had the most humbling proofs of this in the corrupt working of indwelling corruption; he did what he allowed not; he did not what he would, but what he hated (ver. 15): hence *he knew* that in him, that is, in his flesh, in his nature, as received from Adam, dwelt no good thing (ver. 18); and, though delighting in the law of God, after the inward man, yet he saw another law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin, which was in his members (ver. 23). What a humiliating, what a miserable situation! and yet, alas! we know it to be the state of all mankind; we feel it to be ours—a situation from which we are totally unable to deliver ourselves. The subjection and slavery of the will is the grand character of the fall and apostacy of mankind; and when the will is renewed, still the powers of the soul are weak and corrupted. Well might the Apostle, well may each of us, cry out, “*O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*” from this miserable captivity? Such subjects of sin and satan are the proper objects of redemption; and here the Gospel opens the remedy, and puts into the mouth of the believer the song of triumph, “**THANKS BE UNTO GOD, WHO GIVETH US THE VICTORY, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.**” Here the miserable dejected slave begins to revive and look up; yet there is

hope: the Lord Jesus bears this character, and will perform it, till, redeemed out of the hands of all their enemies, his ransomed surround his throne, and possess the inheritance of glory.

The design and undertaking of redemption, on the behalf of such guilty ruined sinners, must have originated in his own sovereign grace and mercy, for what could the subjects of it have to deserve or to claim it? “He saw, and there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore his own arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness it sustained him.” The plan was “according to his own purpose and grace,” and from this all its acts and all its blessings are represented as arising; “according as he hath chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” (Eph. i. 4—6.)

But what chiefly requires our attention is, the transaction, or the work itself, whereby redemption has been obtained: and, in the first place, the CHARACTER which he assumes, and in which he appears, that he might be able to perform his design of redeeming love towards man. This character was marked out under the Law by the circumstance required in the redemption of the lost inheritance, the ceremonies of which were instituted, no doubt, for the benefit of those who had become poor amongst their brethren, but perhaps chiefly to be “the figure of him who WAS TO COME,” IN HIS PERSON AND WORK. “In all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land. If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold.” (Lev. xxv. 24, 25, &c.) When his possession was forfeited, or alienated, if able, he might redeem it himself (ver. 26); but, if not able, it might be



redeemed, not by a stranger, but, by the nearest of kin. This, no doubt, was to shew that he who is the Redeemer must be of the nature of those whom he redeems, without which he would be unsuitable to the undertaking, and incapable of performing the office. Now, let us see the fulfilment; for “all things which are written in the Law of Moses, as well as the Prophets, concerning HIM,” must have their complete accomplishment, and will appear completely accomplished in the person of Jesus the Redeemer.

The dignity and merit of a Divine person were alone competent to the undertaking, and yet the necessary work of suffering and obedience could only be performed in the human nature; both of these unite in the person of Immanuel,—the one essential, the other by an act of voluntary humiliation! The Apostle insists upon this, and seems desirous of impressing us with a sense of its importance (Heb. ii. 11—17): “*in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren:*” hence, as the subjects of redeeming love, whom in covenant love he had determined to take as “children, were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise (in like manner) took part of the same;” and now “he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of one” *nature*; therefore, “he calls them *brethren*” and “*children.*” Therefore, according to the counsels of redemption, “a body was prepared for him.” And “in the fulness of time God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them which were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” (Gal. iv. 4, 5.)

Thus the condescending Jesus fulfilled the prophetic institutions of the Mosaic Law, as to the kinsman Redeemer, and became the nearest of kin to us. And “he who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, humbled himself, and became of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men,” &c. (Phil. ii. 6—8.) Yea, he took the very nature of *fallen creatures*, and appeared “in the *likeness of sinful flesh,*” with all its consequent infirmities,

though without sin. He becomes in nature the brother of his redeemed, that they might be naturally as well as legally his brethren. And thus he entered upon his gracious office, perfectly qualified to fulfil its engagement, and in our nature to work out complete redemption for his people. Oh, amazing love and grace! How shall we ever conceive of their extent, admire their exertions, or praise Him for the enjoyment of the eternal benefits!

Redemption itself is either by *price* or by *power*, by *ransom* or by *conquest*. Either of these might prevail for the deliverance of a captive; both of these are exemplified in the character and work of Jesus. He appears as the Surety and *Ransomer*, and as the mighty *conquering Redeemer*: as the one, He dies; as the other, He triumphs over death and ever lives, “having obtained eternal redemption for us.” Both of these, indeed, were represented under the same Levitical figure, כֹּפֶר. The Kinsman was to pay the price of redemption, and the same person was the avenger of blood to pursue the murderer.

The most common idea of redemption is, the payment of a price for the deliverance of a captive prisoner, or slave. Such we have seen that man is; a prisoner legally to Divine Justice, and voluntarily a slave to the power of Satan; of whom, as such, the Redeemer undertakes the deliverance. Justice has its claim, its rightful terms of liberation, and those terms he undertakes to pay. The price is infinite, and “it ceases for ever from man.” “None can redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.” All, involved in the same ruin and captivity, have equal need of the same deliverance; none can attempt the work of the deliverer. The Angels of Jehovah’s presence, though pure and spotless, though great in power and might, have nothing beyond what is necessary for their own standing; but behold! the Son of God, clothed with flesh and blood, appears the Ransomer of man! In this character (says the Apostle) “it was necessary that this man should *have somewhat to offer*.” (Heb. viii. 3.) What he offers must be *equal to the demand of*

*the Law and justice*: and still more, what no creature could ever boast of, it must be *absolutely his own*, that which he has a right either to give or withhold, that it may be voluntary and valuable. This could only be found in Jesus, the Lord and Saviour.

He also must receive the legal discharge, and secure the actual deliverance, that no further demand may be made, but the ransomed captive brought forth to liberty.

For each of these there is an all-sufficiency in Jesus, and in none other; whether we contemplate his Divine glory, his infinite grace and love, his complete work, the acknowledgment of it in his resurrection, the fulness of grace and power which is put into his hands, and the infinite blessings treasured up in him for all who come to him and believe on his name.

The *Price*, the offering, was “his *own* blood.” The term, the blood of Christ, is frequently used in Scripture for the whole of his sufferings, from his birth to his death, because the bleeding cross consummated and finished the whole: therefore it is said, “*We have redemption through his blood.*” This was properly and absolutely *his own* blood, and so his very undertaking and condescension was a *voluntary* act: he voluntarily took the human nature for this purpose; and he had at all times the power of his own life, either to continue or withdraw from the work and suffering of redemption, except as engaged by his faithfulness to his undertaking. Therefore he could say, what no creature ever could say, “I lay down my life;” “I lay it down of myself,” “as the ransom;” “I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” Thus his offering is suitable to the demands of Divine justice, and capable of being transferred for the benefit of the believing sinner, on whose account it is made, and for whom it is accepted.

The whole work, therefore, of his sufferings, according to the engagements of the covenant, must be considered as involved in the idea of that *blood* which is the ground of our hope and the cause of our salvation.



This commenced in the first act of his humiliation, when “he who was in the form of God took upon himself the form of a servant;” when it was said of him, “Unto us a child is born,” when he lay a babe in the manger, at Bethlehem. And his whole life was but the continuation of that humbled state to which he condescended for the redemption of sinners.

Oh, what a scene of laborious exertions, wearisome fatigue, continued fastings, bitter temptations, contemptuous reproach and cruel derision, when “*he was despised and rejected of men,*” and eminently “*the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief!*” But the garden and the cross, witnessed the deepest scenes of his sorrow, where he peculiarly appeared as the Kinsman Redeemer, paying the mighty debt, and satisfying the demands of justice for his people. There it pleased the Father to bruise him, when he made his soul the offering for sin. There he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him. There “*he became sin for us, who knew no sin,*” and “*bare our sins in his own body on the tree.*” How infinite the love of our redeeming Jesus, to undertake such a labour of love for sinners, for rebels, for enemies, for captives! To take our nature, the likeness of sinful flesh, and, though no sinner himself, but spotless in purity, to be made like one, to be accounted one, to be treated as such, to suffer and to die, to bear all the consequences of sin for such! But would he thus condescend? Let Gethsemane and Calvary be his witness how greatly he loved, how cheerfully he endured, till with a loud voice he proclaims, “*It is finished.*”

“Redemption! tis the wonder of the skies:  
Far more than wonder, it is death in heaven!  
A truth so strange, 'twere bold to think it true,  
If not far bolder still to disbelieve.”

But what a price is here! “Ye are redeemed (says the Apostle) not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ;” precious as the dignity of the offerer. How striking the contrast!

Silver and gold are the most precious and estimable things amongst men: these, however, are but corruptible, but as dung and dross in comparison of the preciousness of the blood of Christ, with all its incorruptible and eternal benefits.

It is Jesus who pays it, God in our nature, assuming a body and a soul in union with himself, who is, therefore, able to redeem to the uttermost, and give an infinite value to the offering he presents. The price he paid was infinitely meritorious, arising from the infinite dignity of the Divine nature, united with the suffering humanity, suited therefore to the demands of justice, and the necessities of sinners. It was a sentiment in this view, and this alone, worthy of an Apostle; "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." How infinitely important that work which such a Redeemer only could perform! How great our misery and necessity which required a price like this! But thus only could he redeem the inheritance for us, and redeem us for the inheritance of glory: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich" (in all the attributes, names, natures, works, and worship of the Godhead), "yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." Sinners who had lost all title to Divine favour, grace, or glory, may now plead the legal acquisition by the Kinsman Redeemer. Sinners who had sold themselves for nought, are redeemed without money of their own, by the invaluable price of their Redeemer's blood. Captives who could not extricate themselves from the bondage and thralldom of the enemy, may now welcome the tidings of liberty, the opening of the prison to them that are bound; the slaves of sin hear, from the sacrifice of the cross, the great trumpet of salvation sounding the jubilee of deliverance, and return to all the privileges of the saints of God, the inheritance of the heavenly Canaan. Blessed be the glorious Friend, and meritorious Ransomer, of his people!

Redemption is sometimes obtained by power or con-

quest. Like the avenger of blood, the mighty Redeemer pursues to death the enemy of his people, and, though he dies himself, yet by death conquers him that had the power of death, even the devil; that great enemy of mankind, who had tempted him to revolt, brought upon the guilty race the sentence of death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, and thus became in the most eminent sense the murderer of the human race. But, “He that sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed,” because “in the image of God made he man\*.” The murderer of the human race shall be destroyed by one of that race; the Seed of the woman, the God-man Jesus. The powerful foe holds them under bondage, but the mighty Redeemer shall deliver them. In the language of the Prophet, speaking of that redemption which is but the type of this, “Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together, and all they that took them captive held them fast, they refused to let them go; but their Redeemer is strong, Jehovah God of Hosts is his name: he shall thoroughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.” (Jer. l. 33, 34.)

The work is arduous: he who accomplishes it must possess almighty power, to conquer and disarm the enemy; but he who undertakes it is able to perform. “His own arm hath brought salvation unto him, and his righteous-

\* See Riccaltoun’s Works, Vol. I. p. 285. This is, perhaps, the true application of the passage, Gen. ix. 5, 6. which there contains a remarkable renewal of the original promise to Noah after the flood, which it is reasonable to expect, but which is not found unless in this passage, and which may be reconciled thus: “Surely the blood of your lives will I require, at the hand of every beast will I require it” (how but by appointing them as the sacrifice for sin upon the altar?); “and at the hand of man,” &c. (no doubt in the same way); and when God sent his only Son to be the Saviour of the world, then at the hand of the Man, the great and mighty Person who is every man’s Brother, he required the life of man. The great shedder of man’s blood, whose trade it was to bring him under death, by man shall his blood be shed, or he shall be brought under death (“for in the image of God made he man”).



ness it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke." (Isa. lix. 15—17.) Behold, then, the prey is taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered, that all flesh may know that Jehovah is the Saviour, and the Redeemer the Mighty One of Jacob. (Isa. xlix. 24—26.)

This was the language of prophecy, and the event justifies the dignity and confidence of the declaration. The humble Jesus, even when arrayed in flesh and blood, entered the lists against our spiritual enemy, and in every attempt of satan and of hell, from the temptation in the wilderness to the agonizing conflict of the cross, he foiled the grand enemy. He acknowledged, indeed, that this was the hour of his implacable persecutor, and the hour appointed for the final exertion of the powers of darkness. See him in the garden and at the cross, where he both paid the price of our redemption, and overcame the foe that held his children in subjection.

Behold the arduous, the painful, and the awful conflict, where the enemy bruised his heel, where "the Seed of the woman bruised the serpent's head!" The ways of God are indeed mysterious: the dying Saviour is to become the Prince of Life, and death is the appointed way of destroying him that had the power of death. Thus the Apostle represents that mysterious scene: then "he blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." There, also, in his deepest sorrow and visible degradation, "he spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly" (perhaps to the surrounding host of spiritual intelligences, who watched to look into all the mysteries of redemption), "triumphing over them in that cross." The dying Saviour, therefore, becomes the living Saviour, in his resurrection, when he bore away the sting of death; and in his ascension, where he led captivity itself captive, and received gifts for rebellious men. Then

as the true **Avenger**, the **Kinsman Redeemer**, he becomes the **Avenger** of his people, pursues and destroys the murderer; yea, with a power beyond all human conception, restores the murdered, becomes the **Author of life**, the resurrection and the life to all his people\*.

“He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight.” (Psa. lxxii. 14.) What glory shines in the great mystery of redemption! its design is worthy the counsels of the eternal Three in **Jehovah**: its plan reveals the most admirable union of holiness and grace: wisdom and power, mercy and truth, here shine out, beyond a parallel in heaven or in earth. It is the manifold wisdom of **God**; the abounding grace of **God**; the exceeding love of **God**! The undertaking is suited to the dignity of a **Person** in **Jehovah** becoming **Immanuel**, **God with us**. He alone could perform, and he has wonderfully executed, it; and now we can adopt the language of the **Prophet**, not in the confidence of prophetic vision only, but in a review of the astonishing fact, “Sing, O ye heavens, for the **Lord (Jehovah)** hath done it: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forests, and every tree therein; for the **Lord (Jehovah)** hath redeemed Jacob and glorified himself in Israel.” (Isa. xlv. 23.) Our faith guided by the unerring word thus contemplates the person and glory of the mighty Deliverer, the Redeemer **JESUS**.

The conquests of his cross are the pledges of the conquests of his throne, where he sits to complete the purposes of redeeming love. That arm is still stretched out to bring his people to himself, and guard them to his kingdom, the inheritance he has obtained for them in

\* In general, the Revenger is considered as the great enemy, from whom the trembling sinner flies to Christ the city of his refuge. But in the view now before us, the Revenger is considered as the Redeemer, the flying man-slayer represents the great enemy pursued by Jesus, taken and destroyed: nor are these different views at all improper, they are considered under different allusions; as, in one sense, the revenger is considered in relation to the slain person, and as his revenger; in the other, in relation to the man-slayer, and as his enemy.

glory. Salvation, with all its blessings, is in his hands, to distribute to his ransomed people. Having redeemed them to God, having opened the way for their return, and thrown open the prison-door to release them from their sad captivity, the voice of mercy proclaims, "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgression, and as a cloud thy sin : return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." (Isa. xliv. 22.)

Thus he begins their practical deliverance, bringing peace to the conscience, and sweetly inclining the heart to return, and leave its fatal and delusive bondage. Having purchased them to himself as a peculiar people, a people of inheritance, from the captivity of Satan, he brings them from his bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of their heavenly Father, citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. But the ultimate blessings of redeeming love are what "EYE HATH NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD, NOR HATH IT ENTERED INTO THE HEART OF MAN TO CONCEIVE." Thus redemption becomes a matter of experience to all to whom it belongs : hence he has promised, "Ye shall *know* that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer the Mighty One of Jacob." (Isa. lx. 16.)

Of what advantage is redemption to those who continue in slavery ? All the eloquent and interesting debates concerning the abolition of slavery would have afforded no consolation to those who, inhumanly captured, had been transported to the region of oppression, and still detained in their captivity. Go, proclaim deliverance ; go, purchase their liberty ; go, set them free, and then they will know and rejoice in the blessings of redemption ! Thus the Gospel comes to us the miserable slaves of sin and Satan : it proclaims the Deliverer, it publishes deliverance ; we have redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ : it shews the way of pardon to the condemned prisoner, acceptance into the favour of a reconciled God, restoration to all the blessings of grace, and an inheritance far more



glorious than that from which we fell. But, if the sinner love his bondage, if he remain under his sin, can the glorious provision be of any advantage to him? No! If he knows not the hardness of his slavery, how shall he seek deliverance, while he has no heart for the enjoyment of all the purchased blessings of grace and glory? If it be not a welcome message to him, how shall he avail himself of it, or obtain an interest in it? The impenitent sinner has no experimental interest in the blessings of redemption; nor, continuing such, can ever enter into the inheritance of glory.

Here that work of grace is begun which is hereafter to be consummated; and, where pardoning mercy flows to cleanse the conscience, and grace delivers from the bondage of corruption, that Redeeming Power, which has broken the captivity, shall preserve and complete the work of love in body and in soul. The holy triumph of the deeply-afflicted patriarch may console the heart of the believer through all the sorrows of the world: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God." (Job. xix. 25.)

But, though the Redeemer be upon the throne to secure the inheritance, and the work of redemption upon which it rests be complete, his people have not yet the complete enjoyment. An Apostle groans under a body of sin and death; believers yet groan, being burdened, and wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption, of the body. Be not discouraged, therefore, amidst the remains of deep-felt and humbling corruption, or the varied afflictions of this mortal state. He who has completed the price of redemption, and the conquest of the enemy, will complete your victory and enjoyment. (See Isa. xl.) "The God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Brought from under the bondage of the enemy, you are not his willing captives, led captive by him at his pleasure. He now no longer claims you as his subjects, though he oppresses and distresses you

as the willing servants of your gracious Lord. “He that hath begun the good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,”—that is, the day of redemption, of complete redemption: now you are longing for it, and soon shall you arrive at it, and be put into full possession of the purchased inheritance. There shall you behold that Kinsman Redeemer, as he is, and be with him and like him for ever. Now he possesses for you, and you as in him (Eph. i. 3, &c.); but then you shall enter into the personal enjoyment. The mighty Redeemer shall there be glorified in his saints, and be glorified and admired by them throughout eternity.

How glorious, indeed, shall he then appear, when he has lifted beggars from the dunghill, to make them inherit the throne of glory! when the once wretched captives of Satan are admitted to all the honours of the children of God, and the heirs of glory! Then shall his love, and grace, and power be known, his triumph be completed, and the counsels of redeeming love be consummated in the eternal redemption of his believing people. “Then shall the ransomed of the Lord return and come to Sion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Isa. xxxv. 10.)

“Oh, give thanks, then, to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever: let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.” (Psa. cvii. 1, 2.) But soon shall the song of heaven awake to celebrate the Redeemer’s glorious triumph. If with an humble heart we feel the disposition, in the enjoyment of his love by faith, to praise him on earth, soon shall we do it perfectly in the perfect enjoyment: we shall join that new that enraptured song, where no heart shall be dissonant, no tongue untuned, saying, “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” And again,

“ Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” Then shall every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, join to ascribe blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. Let every heart worship, and say, Amen, Amen. (See Rev. v. 9, &c.)



## ESSAY VII.

**Captain of Salvation.**

IN the preceding verse of the chapter, where the Apostle introduces the Lord Jesus Christ to our view under this character, he had been describing him in all the glories of his essential and mediatorial dignity. In his *Divine nature* he represents him as the Brightness of the Father's glory, and the express Image of his person: the Lord, by whom the earth and the heavens were made, and who shall remain the same when they perish for ever. (Heb. i. 3—10.)

In his *mediatorial character* he is described as far excelling in glory all those by whom God had before spoken to his church: they were Prophets and righteous men; this is "*his Son*," exalted, as such, above all the angels of his presence, none of which were ever called, like him, to participate the Eternal Throne, and to sit on the right hand of Jehovah till his enemies were made his footstool. They are all but his "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. i. 1—4, 13, 14.) Moses himself, the highest in dignity amongst those whom God honoured with authority in his church, to whom he spake face to face, bore no more comparison with him, than the servant in a family to the son who bears rule over all; than the house with him who built it; or the thing made with its maker. (See chapter iii. 3—6.) Yea, all things are now in his hand, and made subject unto him as on the throne of universal dominion (chapter ii. 8, 9).

But why, then, it may be asked, why was his appearance so lowly—beneath the lowest of his servants? why called to such suffering as none before endured, attended

with unequalled ignominy and contempt, and every circumstance which could enhance the sense of pain and misery, even unto death? Because he took upon himself the character now under consideration. “It became him,” (he saw it suitable to his glory and perfections,) “for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the *Captain of their salvation* perfect through sufferings” (chap. ii. 10); and surely he knew best what became him, and what was suitable to be done, in such an unequalled work of wisdom, power, and love; nor will it be difficult for us to understand the influence of such a conduct, if we consider its wonderful design.

He came to undertake the business of salvation, to save miserable sinners; to go first in the contest, and to obtain the victory; to lead all his people through their trials and conflicts, and make them more than conquerors.

In such a work, suffering and conflict must be his, that triumph may be ours. Blessed Captain, take us under thy banner; we would follow thee, fight in thy strength, obey thine orders, trust thy wisdom and power to direct and uphold us, till we have finished the contest, and gained the kingdom of eternal peace, where no enemy shall assault us more. Much is implied in this character with respect to ourselves, and much to the glory of the Lord Jesus, which ought to render him the object of our wonder and admiration.

With regard to ourselves the title implies that

We are in a *state of warfare*. This has been the state of the world ever since the fall of man sowed discord in creation. This world, indeed, contains within itself every thing that is suited to the enjoyment of the animal nature of man; and he who has no consciousness of superior existence, or of something beyond, may perhaps find all the satisfaction which he is capable of, in its pursuits and possessions.

In this case there is no warfare; if earthly circumstances are easy, all proceeds in tranquillity and peace; but then it is the sensitive life of man alone which finds its grati-

fication here ; and the circumstance itself proves, that he is sunk from his high original, and become an earthly, sensual creature.

This, alas! is the case with multitudes.

But when he begins to feel that he has a spiritual and immortal part, whose interests are connected with a spiritual and eternal world, in living to God, and in the enjoyment of God, then he finds that he is in a state where every thing which surrounds him is hostile to his true interest. Every thing within and without him  *wars against the soul*. He must deliver up himself either on the side of the *world*, the *flesh*, and the *devil*, or against these on the side of Christ and his cause. There is no alternative ; he that is not with Christ is against him. The believer takes up in faith his decided determination : “ WE ARE FOR THEE, AND ON THY SIDE, THOU SON OF JESSE.” But what enemies he makes in that one avowal ! All that are against God and Christ are then against him. How awful, how dangerous, and how powerful is the opposition ! The contest is arduous, the result is of infinite moment,—to save or to lose the soul,—to be with God and Christ and all his redeemed saints, or with miserable spirits in the regions of darkness for ever,—to obtain eternal happiness, the crown of the victor, or to sink into eternal misery, the fate of the servant and slave of satan. This contest he is taught to expect as soon as he engages in the cause of Christ, or seeks the salvation of his soul. The Apostle informs him, that “ all that is in the *world*, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world ;” and he is directed by faith to overcome these. (1 John ii. 15, 16 ; v. 4, 5.) For “ whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.” His own experience soon confirms the Scripture declaration, that “ the *flesh* lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” (Gal. v. 17, 18, 24.) He is soon convinced that “ the *enemy of souls*, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. v. 8) ; while he carries the worst enemy within *himself*, a “ *body*



*of sin and death.*" So that the Christian life is one continued course of "denying *himself*," his very nature, his natural appetite, affections, desires, all that he brought into the world with him as a child of a fallen parent, mortifying the sin which dwelleth in him, that he may follow Christ in the regeneration. (Matt. xvi. 24; Rom. vi. 12, &c.)

All this the believer, in faith, is determined to do: the enemies of his Lord are accounted his enemies. He feels he cannot save them both, circumstances teach him, that if his heart incline to the world, this introduces into his mind a deadness and insensibility to God and spiritual things; and the enjoyment of its pleasures has a natural tendency to darken the eyes of faith, and weaken the energy of spiritual exertion.

When the practical question, therefore, arises—which cause he shall espouse—he can say with the Apostle, "I account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." This is the determination of his understanding, his will, and the affections of his heart. Hence, if he feels another law in his members, he is not under its dominion, although he groans under the opposition of a corrupted nature, and the attacks of his powerful enemy. He longs for that victory, without which he feels he must be miserable. A sense of pardoned sin will not satisfy him, while he feels the remains of it, and is engaged in the conflict against it; he desires a daily victory over its love and power, and longs for the time when that victory shall be complete. Oftentimes, oppressed by the influence of his corruptions and the malice of his enemy, he goes mourning from day to day, and is ready to say, "I shall one day perish." But still he arises for the combat, takes the whole armour of God, and fights the good fight of faith, knowing that the victory must be obtained, and that if his enemies are not destroyed, they will destroy his soul. The end of the warfare is, the gracious reward of victory in eternal salvation,—to be brought from under sin, satan, and death, into the

presence of God, the kingdom of his glory,—to obtain the prize of his high calling, the crown of everlasting life, in the eternal likeness to his Lord.

This again animates his courage, his holy resolution, and believing exertions. Though faint, he is yet pursuing. It is a glorious contest in which he is engaged. But what is his hope? Blessed be God, though weak in himself, he is not like the man who begins to build a tower without computing the cost; or like him who goes forth to meet the enemy without inquiring into his ability, or resource for resistance. He goes not to war at his own charges; his consolation and his security is, that he has a Friend who, with infinite ability and grace, bears the character of the Captain of his salvation, and will realize it in all its glories, to his eternal triumph. He goes forth, therefore, in *His* strength, not in his own; he trusts his mighty Helper, and is confident of daily deliverance and everlasting victory.

If he be the Captain of my salvation, then, O my soul, mine enemies need not alarm me, my courage need not fail, my victory is sure. Let the weak believer who has engaged under his banner with holy confidence realize the consolation. He who has drawn your heart to him has united your interest with his own, *and through every stage of the Christian warfare to the end, will discover himself as the Captain of your salvation.*

The office of a captain is, to go first at the head of his troops, to direct and lead them on, to animate them in the battle, and to reward their labours. These are the leading ideas which we may consider as connected with the name, as applied to the Lord Jesus Christ; in him they are all answered; yea, in every allusion, he arises infinitely above the comparison. In some circumstances they faintly resemble his glorious character, but in none can they equal his pre-eminent dignity. A few particulars will confirm this observation.

It is true of the Lord Jesus Christ, that

He has gone first *in the contest* and led the way.

Wherever and however we are engaged in the Christian conflict, we are only following the footsteps of the Lord our Saviour. When he entered on this scene of combat, he submitted to endure every thing which we are called to suffer, except those sorrows which arise from the consciousness of personal corruption; and who can tell how similar to this might be the consciousness of having all the sins of his people lying upon him, as their responsible Surety? We are expressly told, he had the feeling of all our infirmities; our natural weaknesses, our sorrows, our afflictions, and distresses; yea, that “in all points he was tempted, like as we are, though without sin.” And this is justly made the peculiar ground of encouragement to the tempted believer, as it affords the confidence of that sympathy, which an experience of similar association in afflictions always produces. (Heb. iv. 15.)

Hence we see him entering upon life in the most abject state of poverty, and cast out from the womb: his public ministry is preceded by a grand attack of the enemy, in the temptations in the wilderness, which were no doubt repeated in substance afterwards, and perhaps frequently, in the course of his laborious and distressful life; for we are told, “the enemy departed from him for a season” only. In the conflicts of the garden and the cross, all the malice of earth, all the powers of darkness and of hell, were let loose upon him, and the mighty Saviour endured all the violence of their assault. (See Ps. xxii. 12—21.) Whatever could lie burdensome upon the mind, from the guilt of sin, or from the wrath of God, there pressed upon the soul of the sinner’s Surety, the mighty Ransomer, Redeemer, and Mediator between God and man. There he was “sorrowful even unto death,” when the agony of his soul, much more than the tortures of his mangled body, exhausted his frame, and separated his spotless spirit. Passing through the same gloomy passage, and path of death, though he lay in the grave as one of us, though the enemy bruised the heel of his human nature, and he appeared for a time as one overcome; yet from thence he



arose again; and like the powerful Nazarite, when once, at midnight, he broke through the gates of Gaza, and carried them away in triumph, He rose as the mighty Conqueror, and carried away with him the keys of death and the grave, that he might open the way for us. Thus upon every thorny path in which we tread, we see impressed the foot-steps of the Redeemer: he has known every step by his own experience, and is therefore the suitable Friend and Leader of his chosen people.

For as he has gone first in the contest, so

He has gone first *in the victory*. He led the way only that he might conquer. He knew our enemies were too mighty for us: he knew his own ability to destroy, when sovereign love, and grace unspeakable, influenced him to devote himself to the undertaking. "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor;" he put himself in our place and stead; "therefore his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness it sustained him: for he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance, and was clad with zeal as a cloak." (Isa. lix. 16, 17.) When sin assaulted his pure and holy soul, it found no place within him; when temptation agitated his spotless mind, like the agitation of pure water, it excited no defilement, and soon subsided into tranquillity and pellucid clearness. When death seized his prey, he broke the sting, and deprived him of all his power to injure; the vanquished enemy was compelled to loose his hold, and to let the Conqueror go free. Thus he has gone before to conquest, that we might only follow after him, to reap the fruit and gather up the spoil of his victory. "The Breaker is come up before his people; they therefore have broken up (in him), and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it; and their King shall pass before them, and the Lord (Jehovah, as the Captain of Salvation) on the head of them." (Mic. ii. 13.) Behold the ascending Jesus commands the everlasting doors to lift up, and give him entrance to his throne. He

comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah; travelling in the greatness of his strength, the Righteous One, mighty to save; red in his apparel with the blood of his conquered enemy, sprinkled and stained from the wine press in which he had trod them down, as grapes of the vineyard, in the fury of his anger, when the day of vengeance was in his heart, and the year of his redeemed was come. (Isa. lxiii. 1—4.) We read the songs which celebrate the acts of ancient heroes with delight: the wonders they performed, the designs which they had in view, the benefits which they obtained for their country, or nation, when devoting themselves the willing sacrifices for the public good, engage our attention and command our admiration. But which of these can compare with the acts and victories of the Captain of Salvation? With what rapture should we hear, and hang upon, those delightful songs which celebrate the triumphs of Immanuel. Triumphs most glorious in themselves, in which we are most peculiarly interested, and from which we reap such abundant fruits; the fruits of peace, of all spiritual blessings and glory in the end!

He (as he ought) has gone first,

*In the rewards of victory.* We behold, by faith in his word, our conquering Leader reaping the effects of his own labours, and thus ensuring the victory to his people. The promise is fulfilled to the dying, risen, Jesus, “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.” “I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong.” (Isa. liii. 11, 12.) “We see Jesus” (by the view of faith), “who was (for a short time) made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.” (Heb. ii. 9.) He, as the Forerunner, has for us entered (ch. vi. 20), and, “being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal

redemption for us." (ch. ix. 11, 12.) Hence in him we are entered, "blessed with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus," raised up together to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. i. 3, and ii. 6.) Through the veil of his flesh he has consecrated for us a new and living way into the holiest (Heb. x. 19, 20), in which we have boldness to enter, because our Jesus has gone before, having first used and therefore prepared and ensured our approach.

Oh, what a glorious hope springs up to the eye of faith from the consideration of this character of Jesus Christ! Let me view him on the throne of his glory, securing my salvation; and, following on in his strength, dismiss my fears, and expect ere long to conquer too.

Behold, my soul, to ensure this gracious issue, he yet supports and executes the office in the experience of all his people, and now goes at the head of his church, throughout the Christian warfare, against the powers of sin and darkness. Without this how uncertain would be our hopes! How little is our victory when we cannot realize this! The weakest enemies are too powerful for the arm of feeble flesh, too subtle for the wisdom of blinded man. The never-failing presence of the Redeemer can alone secure his church, or lead his people through to glory.

Under this character, and encouraged by this gracious promise, he led his chosen people through the wilderness, and animated them to the conquest of the promised Canaan. "As I was with Moses," (said the Lord to Joshua,) "so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee: be strong and of a good courage" (Jos. i. 5, 6): "only be thou strong and very courageous." (ver. 7.) When, therefore, Joshua was by Jericho, we are told, that "he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? and he said, Nay, but as *Captain of the host of the Lord* am I now come." Who this person was



is evident, by the immediate act of adoration which the leader of Israel paid to him, and the command which was then given to him, which often *attended* the manifestation of the Divine presence, to “loose his shoe from off his foot, because the place whereon he stood was holy.” (Jos. v. 13—15.)

The promise, however, we might have apprehended was given only for the particular occasion; but the Apostle has directed us to apply it to ourselves: (Heb. xiii. 5, 6.) “The Lord hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee; so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”

If, then, we consider the manner in which he executed the office in behalf of the Israelites, till he placed them victorious over all their enemies in the land of promise, and put them into possession of all the excellent produce of that land flowing with milk and honey, we may learn what we are to expect from the great Antitype, and the encouragement which he designs to give to his New-Testament church, and his believing people, by revealing himself to them under this title. “Go, and I will be with thee,” is sufficient to justify any undertaking, for active service or patient suffering, for warfare or for submission. But what is the whole word of Scripture, but one continued promise of his presence with his people, or the confirmation of the truth by the actual performance of it? Of his church it is declared, “*God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.*” So that they may boldly say, “*The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.*” (Psa. xlv. 5—7.) In this view the Psalmist directs us, in another psalm, to contemplate the security of the church: “Walk about Sion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following.” But wherein consists this mighty defence, this inviolable security? “This God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our Guide even unto death.” (Psa. xlviii. 11—14; see

also Psa. cxxiv.) Here is the glory of this animating character, and the confidence of the believer in this world of dangers,—Jesus is Immanuel, God with us. In trials, in afflictions, in sorrows and temptations; in declining age, when flesh and heart fail; in the hour of death, when the trembling spirit stands upon the borders of eternity, and the body is sinking into the silent grave, he who has before trod the path of life in its lowest and most afflicted state, with all its sorrows and distresses, who has entered and passed through the gloomy valley of the shadow of death, will pass at the head of his chosen people, afford them support, and secure their deliverance. “Fear not” says he), “for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” (Isa. xli. 10—16; compare xliii. 1, &c.)

The presence of the Lord is the rest and confidence of his people. Well may they urge the prayer, “If thy presence go not with us, lead us not up hence.” Well may they rejoice in the same answer to their earnest supplication, “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” Blessed with the experience of this, neither the floods nor the fires have been able to shake the peace or security of his people: in this they have triumphed in, and triumphed over, all; in this they shall triumph, till his eternal presence secures all his redeemed church, when they stand around his throne of glory. Here, then, let us place our hope, and learn that here alone, by the way, is our strength and our victory.

Whenever we have attempted the contest in our own strength, what has been the issue but disappointment and confusion? We have failed in our expectations, been discouraged in our exertions, and have been ready to lie down in despair. Such will always be the issue of those attempts, which nature makes in its own strength. None but an Almighty Arm, stretched out for our defence, can defeat the power of the enemy; nothing but the sight of it, by faith, can give us the confidence of victory. Hence

the believer's contest is, "*the fight of faith.*" The Captain of our salvation has undertaken for, and will be with, his people: therefore, they shall not perish, but have everlasting life. He, therefore,

Has a right to direct, and to command; and it is their privilege to receive all their directions from him; and their duty and security to be obedient. This is peculiarly the office of the Leader. If destitute of his directions, or if those directions are disobeyed, the necessary consequence would be, confusion and defeat. The infinite wisdom of the Captain of Salvation well suits him to be the Leader of his people. He undertakes to regulate every circumstance of our warfare. He appoints the various places of his people, in which he sees it best for them to act for the glory of his name. He knows when to lead them forth against the enemy, and what trials, temptations, or conflicts are best suited to their state or strength. We are ready, indeed, to wish for any rather than those by which we feel ourselves oppressed; and to imagine that in any other circumstance of trial we should be able to acquit ourselves with more faith, patience, satisfaction, or joy. But, no doubt, the light of Heaven will manifest, that His appointments were the wisest, and that the trials which He sent, and the conflicts to which He led us, were the very trials and conflicts which, had we possessed his infinite wisdom, we should have chosen for ourselves. Did we but follow the directions of our victorious Leader, we should much oftener discern this by the way; did we but put on the whole armour which he has prepared for us, we should stand "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." We might wrestle against flesh and blood, against principalities and powers, with holy confidence, were our loins but girt about with truth; had we but put on the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of the hope of salvation; had we in our hands the sword of the Spirit, and were our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. If to this we add the prayer of



faith, "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance," our confidence of victory would animate us in the conflict. Here, believer, see the guidance of thy Leader, the wisdom of his directions, and the way to conquer through him daily.

But, if the soldier be punished for the *breach of orders*, let not the Christian soldier expect to escape the effects of inattention and disobedience. If we follow not his directions, we shall soon have reason to lament our obstinacy and our folly. Let those who have not enlisted under his banner despise his commands, or oppose his authority; but let the believer who loves his Lord, and espouses his cause, be active and obedient. The world, indeed, are under a different leader; "the god of this world, the spirit which worketh in all the children of disobedience," who "has blinded the eyes of them which believe not." (Eph. ii. 2; compare 2 Cor. iv. 4.)

But Christian soldiers are under Christ their Leader, called by his Spirit, enlisted by his grace; they have chosen his service, and declared themselves the advocates of his cause. They take their standing not under the first Adam, or the great deceiver of his race; but, under Christ; they stand engaged to fight for him, to fight by him, to fight in his strength, and trust, when conquerors, to be with him in his glory for ever.

Is this our case? May the Spirit of God determine our hearts in his cause, remembering that we cannot serve two masters; that "his servants we are to whom we *obey*, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." (Rom. vi. 16—19.) If animated by the same Spirit, we shall use the language of the Apostle; "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." (1 Cor. ix. 26, 27.)

See, then, how he

Animates his soldiers to the contest ! The exhortations and promises of his word convey strength and courage to the believing mind. “Let us, therefore, who are of the day, be sober,” saith the Apostle, “putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation ; for God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thess. v. 8, 9.) But here the comparison fails. He not only exhorts to courage and to conquest, but conveys the wisdom and the power by which to conquer. By a real communication of grace and spiritual might, he strengthens the weak hands, and confirms the feeble knees, and makes the fearful in heart to be strong. When ready to faint, frequently do his people, in the means of grace, and in the ordinances of his house, experience the renovation of their spiritual desires, their spiritual powers, and spiritual consolations. The believer adopts the triumphant language of the Psalmist, “It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.” “He teacheth my hands to war. Thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation : thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.” “Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle, thou hast subdued under me those which rose up against me ; thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me.” (Psa. xviii. 32, &c.)

How many feeble saints, discouraged by the appearance or the prospect of their trials, have found his presence affording joy in the midst of them, and triumph in the end !

The timid saint, who, through fear of death, has been all his life-time subject to bondage, has met the tyrant disarmed of his sting, and of his terrors ! How many of Christ’s believing people have welcomed him as the friendly reliever from all the sorrows of earth, the happy messenger of peace and eternal joy ! have heard his voice only as the voice of their Lord, saying, “COME UP HITHER ;”

and have longed then for his icy arms to convey them to the realms of light and immortality!

But, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. xv. 55, &c.) But our Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. What he has done in the behalf of his people he can do again. Yes! and he will repeat the wonders of his grace, till all his redeemed are brought into glory! Without him we can do nothing; but when we most feel our own weakness, then we boast to be "strong in the Lord." Not that we are "sufficient of ourselves," said an Apostle, "to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." (2 Cor. iii. 5.) And with him we also may add, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. iv. 13.)

Look forward, then, ye fearful saints, with the confidence and joy of faith. Soon shall the church militant become the church triumphant, and the groans of conflict shall be changed for the shouts of victory. Then shall the great Captain of Salvation with his own hand bestow the rewards of his grace, the spoils of his meritorious victory, and the fruits of ours through him. "To him that overcometh will he give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." (Rev. ii. 7.) "To him that is faithful unto death will he give the crown of life." (ver. 10.) "To him that overcometh will he give to eat of the hidden manna" (ver. 17), and "will give him power over the nations" (ver. 26): he shall be clothed in white raiment, and be acknowledged by him before the Father and the holy angels (ch. iii. 5); shall stand as a pillar in the temple of God, the name of his God written upon him (ver. 12);—yea! shall sit together with his exalted Lord upon his throne, as he has overcome, and is set down with his Father in his throne (ver. 21). Blessed be the God of salvation, for the appointment of such a Captain to lead us on to victory. To whom else could we



ever have trusted the keeping of our soul, or the conquest of our enemy? Infinite wisdom, almighty power, unchanging grace and compassion, were necessary to secure our confidence; and these meet alone in the Lord our Saviour.

He has undertaken, and has conquered, for us! In this work of the Redeemer the bitterest conflicts were necessary, and therefore he endured to the end. But we behold him returning from the scene of combat, the conquering, rising, ascending, and triumphant Lord; and are thus assured, that “he is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him, because he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” (Heb. vii. 25.)

But as he “was once offered to bear the sins of many,” “unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.” (Heb. ix. 28.) We judge of the honours of a general by the labours he has endured, the campaigns he has fought, the victories he has won. If in *all* he has manifested consummate wisdom, prudence, courage, and fortitude; and, especially, if *in all* he has been crowned with success, he claims and enjoys the confidence of his troops, who then fight under him with the assurance of victory. But herein is the incomparable excellency of Jesus the Lord; he conquers in every scene of trial, and defeats every project of the enemy. He triumphed even when he fell, and rose to bestow the benefits of his conquest upon his people. Those are eternally secure who are under the Lord Jesus Christ as their leading Captain; his eye is upon them; their enemies are already vanquished; he leads them forth to daily conquest, and to everlasting triumph. He has conquered for them, and will conquer in them and by them; and, preserved by his grace, they shall reap the eternal rewards that his own grace bestows. Because he overcame they shall surely overcome, and see every enemy under their feet shortly.

“If thou shalt say in thine heart, These enemies are more than I; how can I dispossess them? thou shalt not be afraid of them, for the Lord thy God is among you, a

mighty God, and terrible, &c. The Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed." (Deut. vii. 17—23.) He gives the same encouragement to his people as David once did to Abiathar; "Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh my life, seeketh thy life; but with me thou shalt be in safeguard." (1 Sam. xxii. 23.)

The cause of Christ and his church, then, is the same. He has made it such of his own sovereign love, and they have made it such in the exercise of grace and dependence upon him: there can, therefore, be no doubt of ultimate success and triumph. Behold the triumphant bands around the throne, who, having come out of great tribulation, have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. With robes of glory and palms of victory they stand around him, ascribing salvation to God and to the Lamb. (Rev. vii. 9.) Do not be surprised at the present conflict; this is the season for the combat; but realize thy glorious Friend, the Captain of thy salvation, and, armed with his strength, go forth to conquest.

Faith now engages his help, and ensures his constant care and love. Whatever be now the conflicts, soon shall arise the shouts of victory, by the grace and through the blood of the Lamb.

## ESSAY VIII.

**Chosen—Elect.**

THIS is a character of the Lord Jesus which has a relation to every other character which he sustains : in whatever he is, or whatever he has done, he is, *as such*, and *in all*, the *Chosen* and the *Elect* of God. It is this Divine choice and appointment to all the work and offices of mediation and redemption, which lays the ground of our hope and confidence in him, secures our peace and consolation, and makes him, in all his offices, the suitable Object of the election and choice of all his people. The appellation, indeed, does not belong to him as God ; for as such he is essentially, necessarily, and was eternally, existing in the Godhead, united in all its attributes and perfections,—One in the Divine Nature with the Father and the Holy Ghost,—and these together in unity the *One* JEHOVAH. It can only be applied to one who exists in a character which was the effect of choice, and must therefore belong to him alone as he is the Mediator, in which he is properly styled “ the Christ, the Chosen of God.” (Luke xxiii. 35.) He is the Elect, the dearly beloved, of the Father, chosen as the Head of all his works of creation ; chosen as the medium of all intercourse between God and sinners, in this and the eternal world ; chosen to perform the work of redemption, to be the Depository of all its blessings, the Giver of all its grace, in whom all the expectations and hopes of sinners are to rest ; and in whom, as the Head of his church, all his people in heaven and earth are united, for the purposes of restoration from the ruins of the Fall, and the enjoyment



of grace and glory. These leading views, out of the many which are connected with the title, will now engage our attention. And may the great Glorifier of Jesus exalt him in our hearts! The Chosen, the Elect, of the Father, “in whom his soul delighteth,” may well be the object of our choice, in all his offices; and our supreme delight, in the glories of his person, and the blessings of his salvation, through time and eternity! But as the characters included in this, and which must here be alluded to, will, in the course of these Essays, be severally and separately considered, the most general observations on each will be sufficient at present, practically applied for our instruction and consolation.

It is the great and leading design, if not the only object, of Revelation, to direct us in those concerns which relate to our deliverance from the consequences of the Fall, and our eternal salvation: it cautiously avoids exciting, and positively forbids, a spirit of curious speculation upon subjects which are beyond the reach of our present powers; and commands our implicit submission to its declarations, as to the objects and employments of the world unseen. But the antecedent character and essential glory of the person of *Him* who is the Redeemer of his people is no speculation: it must be highly interesting, and seriously connected with our state and hopes. Whatever, therefore, relates to him, demands our serious inquiry, and is so stated in the Word of Truth as to require and excite our attention and regard. We are told of “glories which he had with the Father before the world was;” that “he was in the beginning with God, and was God.” In the intimate union of the Divine nature he was the necessary and eternal delight of the Father and the Holy Ghost, the distinct Persons in the One Jehovah; though of the nature of that delight and complacency which the Sacred Persons receive, in the contemplation of their distinct but inseparable glories, we can form no conception. The first step which seems to bring down the Divine Nature to the contemplation of creatures is, the transaction of the eternal covenant, in which the person of the Son is constituted the Medium of

all the outgoings of Divine power, the great Agent of all the acts of Godhead, the Fountain of all creative energy, and the Head of all creation and redemption. In all these he appears under the character of the (λογος, or) *Word* of God, and as the Chosen of God, who is in all the object of his eternal delight, complacency, and perfect acquiescence. Hence we are told, “All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made which was made.” (John i. 3.) “By him were all things created, visible or invisible,” &c. “*By* him and *for* him;”...“and by him all things consist.” (Col. i. 16, 17.)

But the character to which he is especially chosen, and to which he bowed himself down, in the economy of redemption, is indeed a character of condescension and humiliation; in which, notwithstanding, he is eminently the Father's delight and choice, as the *Servant of God* in the great work of man's salvation. This is the particular allusion of the Prophet, when we are directed to fix our attention upon him in this character. His work, condescension, compassion, and certainty of success, are there also beautifully described, and applied for the consolation of the fearful and weak believer: “Behold *my* *Servant*, whom I uphold; mine *Elect*, in whom my soul delighteth,” &c.: “he shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench,” &c. (Isa. xlii. 1—3; comp. ver. 5—16.) As such, though chosen of God on account of his essential dignity and suitableness to the work, yet (O unsearchable grace and love!) the whole transaction in the covenant of grace was not for his own sake, but the sake of his people, and to accomplish the purposes of redeeming love to them! When, therefore, he entered upon the work of a *Servant*, his very human nature, that very body of flesh and blood which he assumed, and which was prepared for him by the power of the Holy Ghost, was chosen, to be united to the Godhead, that he might thus become, as *IMMANUEL*, the *Servant of the Father*. When “sacrifice

and offering thou didst not desire," then said the Saviour, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!" "Mine ears hast thou opened;" or, as the Apostle has rendered it, "*A body hast thou prepared me,*" in which to perform the office, and to accomplish on earth the undertaking, of the eternal counsels. On this account the Father delights in the Son of his love. And in such manner the Divine testimony was borne to the whole person of Jesus, in the union of his Divine and human nature, when at his baptism the voice from heaven declared, in connection with the descent of the mystic dove upon his head, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. iii. 17.) He has, therefore, carried up the same human nature in which he suffered upon the cross, in his elevation to the throne, and appears and will appear glorified in it throughout eternity, uniting the human nature inseparably with the Divine, and thus uniting man to God!

But the covenant choice and election of this wonderful Person, especially appears in his authoritative and absolute appointment, as the only but all-sufficient Redeemer and Saviour of his people. The covenant designation to this office is thus represented by the Psalmist: "Then thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is *Mighty*; I have exalted one chosen out of the people." (Psa. lxxxix. 19\*.) This gives us as true an idea of the subject, as human things can give us of Divine. It teaches us expressly, that the work of salvation was only to be performed by him; that the terms of salvation were committed to him for their fulfilment, who was chosen as the *Mighty One*, in his *Divine nature*, that he might be able to accomplish them; and yet who was "*chosen out of the people,*" as to his *human nature*, that he might, as the Kinsman Redeemer, redeem his brethren. As a Person in Jehovah, he could not, indeed, be the *Chosen* or appointed one, but in connection with his own voluntary concurrence. The Father delighted in him as undertaking to be the great Agent of the Covenant;

\* See Preface to Romaine's Collection of Psalms.



the Son delighted, as such, in the choice and delegation to be the Author of salvation to his people; and the Spirit acquiesced, with infinite satisfaction and delight, to become the Glorifier of Jesus, in testifying to his glory and offices, and the Applier of his salvation to the hearts of sinners. Thus he undertook to perform whatever was necessary in the covenant of redemption: the fulfilment of the terms belonged to him; and for this he alone was elected and chosen in the everlasting purposes of wisdom and grace, as being alone able and sufficient for the undertaking. The necessity of this will plainly appear, when we reflect a little upon what these terms are; for what are frequently, but very improperly, called *terms or conditions of salvation*, are, in fact, as performed by man, but parts of that salvation, and the covenant gifts of the Saviour, communicated to man, as the result of his finished work of redemption, his ascension “with gifts to give unto men,” and his exaltation to the throne.

To atone for sin; to pay the ransom-price for lost and enslaved sinners; to honour the law and government of God; to render the perfect and adequate satisfaction to Divine justice; to work out a perfect righteousness, capable of being made over to his people, by Divine imputation, as theirs; to bear the wrath of God to the uttermost, and yet survive its effusion, and rise to life eternal;—then, from his throne above, to new-create fallen sinners; to give spiritual life to the spiritually dead; to cleanse from all the stain of sin; to justify from all things; to capacitate by regenerating grace for the enjoyment of, and then to bestow, all the blessings of his salvation:—these were the works for which the Redeemer was chosen, and which from eternity he undertook. But there are works of Almighty power which could only be accomplished by our Almighty Jesus, Jehovah the Saviour. And happy is it for us, that he who engaged in the undertaking, both “spake in righteousness,” and was “mighty to save.” Such a glorious person was alone capable of the undertaking; and this he not only undertook, but this he has fulfilled, in all its labours, its

sufferings, and meritorious obedience, as IMMANUEL, God with us; and is fulfilling in all its saving power and energies in his kingdom above. Witness his life of purity and righteousness, but of grief, sorrow, and persecution; witness the groans of Gethsemane and the wounds of Calvary: hear the testimony of all his people, who have experienced, or are yet experiencing, the “power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his sufferings,” the fruit of his redeeming love. Still he is the Chosen of God, for the same important purposes: “He is laid in Sion for a foundation; the stone, the tried corner-stone, elect, precious” (Isa. xxviii. 16); and “other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid.” (1 Cor. iii. 11.) “To them, therefore, who believe,” and thus discern his glories, “he is,” he must be, “precious.” (1 Pet. ii. 6.) He who is the Elect and *Chosen of God*, the choice of Infinite Wisdom and Knowledge, cannot but be suitable and all-sufficient for the purposes for which he is chosen: for he was the Chosen and Elect, not by sovereign grace as sinners are, but by *merit*, as altogether adequate and competent to the design that was to be completed. He has, therefore, justified the choice by the completeness of his work, to which nothing can be added, and nothing must be taken away. Whatever, then, his outward appearance was on earth; whatever men may conceive of his person, or his character, what God approves must be glorious and worthy; worthy in every respect of all the honour put upon him in the counsels of eternity, and the declarations of the word. And whenever he bestows the blessings of salvation on his people, the wisdom, the grace, and the love, of “the Father is glorified in the Son.”

These are considerations calculated to afford “*strong consolation*” to the guilty penitent “who flies for refuge to the hope thus set before him in the Gospel;” to the trembling believer, whose faith, though weak, takes hold of the arm and power of Jesus, as his confidence. Never has a holy God looked upon fallen man with approbation in any other way; but to this Surety of the Covenant the

Father has always had respect; in him he has always delighted; and has recommended him in his word, from the beginning, to the faith and love of his people, as their sure salvation. In this love of the Father, he himself rejoiced as Mediator, and gives his believing people the confidence of the same love in and through him. "I in them, and thou in me," says the Saviour, now about to lay down his life for them, "that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me. Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world, &c. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." (John xvii. 23—26.)

In all the work of his condescension, he was the delight of the Father, and never more so than when on the cross. Though in that scene of sorrow, "his hand was upon the Man of his right hand; upon the Son of man whom he had made strong for himself" (Psa. lxxx. 17); yet, when he who loved his church, there gave himself for it, his oblation was "an offering and sacrifice to God, of a sweet smelling savour." (Eph. v. 2.) Thus we are frequently told, as to the ancient sacrifices, that "the Lord smelled a savour of rest;" not, surely, in the sacrifices themselves, but as the types of the great vicarious offering, of the chosen Saviour, in whom his soul delighted. Such views as these, necessarily lead the mind, even of the timid and fearful believer, to a conclusion most consoling and satisfactory. If the chosen Saviour be thus acceptable to God, in all that he has done, and is doing, for his people, so must all his people be as *in* him, and so must all those services be, however weak, polluted, and unworthy, in themselves, which are offered up in his name. Yes, presented as the obedience of faith, they are all acceptable to God in Christ Jesus. This will be greatly confirmed by the further con-



sideration, that, in reference to the *perfection of his work of redemption*,

He is the *Elect and Chosen of God* as the *Head of his church*; the rich Depositary of all spiritual blessings, and *the Head over all things* to it. The appointment to this was, no doubt, in the counsels of eternity; the actual investment was in time, in consequence of his accomplishment of all the terms of mediation, and when, “for the suffering of death, he was crowned with glory and honour.” (Heb. ii. 9.) “God hath therefore,” says the Apostle, “highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.” (Phil. ii. 9.) “He hath set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, &c. and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is his body,” &c. (Eph. i. 21–23.) The design of his exaltation, he himself informs us, is, to secure to his people the fruit of his humiliation: “I go to prepare a place for you: and, if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself.” (John xiv. 3.)

In allusion to this part of his mediatorial character, he is represented as uniting all under him; “that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, God might gather together all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him.” (Eph. i. 10.) “And to reconcile all things to himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” (Col. i. 20.) For this purpose it was well pleasing to the Father, that *all* fulness should dwell in him; all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge be laid up in him, and all the fulness of the Godhead dwell in him bodily. (Col. i. 19, and ii. 3–9.) The reason of this constitution of grace is given by the Evangelist, “that we might receive out of his fulness, and grace for grace.” (John i. 16.) The necessary consequence of this must be, that as there is a complete fulness in Christ for the use of his people, believers are complete, as in this complete Mediator. (ver. 10.) They need no other de-

pendence, no other fountain of supply ; viewed as in their perfect Surety, they are all-perfect before God, not only “ accepted in the Beloved,” but “ made the righteousness of God in him.” As there can be no blessing, but what his mediation and work of sufferings merited, so justice as well as grace has deposited all in him, and made him the rich repository and treasure-house of all our hopes. From him the believer receives all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and blesses the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for them. (Eph. i. 3.)

Chosen as their Head, his people of course are chosen as his members ; a most beautiful allusion, which marks their close union and connection with him, and their certain reception of his blessings. He is the Vine of his Father’s culture, of which they are the living branches, receiving all vital influence from him, cultivated by his providence and grace that they may bring forth fruit abundantly, and separate from whom they can do nothing. (John xv. 1—5 ; compare Isa. xxvii. 7—9.) And while he is “ *set forth* by God as the propitiation, for the remission of sin,” he is still further “ made of God unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” For these very purposes he was chosen of God in the counsels of everlasting love ; and though, as God, all fulness is essentially in him, as God-man Mediator, he receives all to communicate to sinners, upon the ground of his fulfilment of all the covenant terms of that mediation.

Surely, then, he ought to be chosen of us as all our salvation and all our desire : else we disagree with God, and may justly be accused of standing in opposition to his authoritative appointments, and at enmity with his designs. This most certainly is the temper of those who neither value nor seek after the Lord Jesus ; who, ignorant of their guilt and need, the necessity of such an appointment, and of such a Saviour, deny his glory, and, instead of delighting in him and in his salvation, are careless, if not averse, to its provisions. They bear the character so strikingly described by the Apostle : “ To them which are

disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed." (1 Pet. ii. 7, 8.) But this *living stone*, which is *chosen of God* and precious, is precious also to, and chosen by, *all* them who believe. (ver. 4—7.)

To concur with the wisdom of God is surely the wisest conduct in man: but so only does that man practically who loves the Lord Jesus Christ above all; who makes him all his salvation, and looks by faith for all grace and all blessings through him. For this is God's command, and his appointed way of salvation, with which all his promises are connected, and which are "all yea and amen in Christ Jesus." As this, also, is no arbitrary choice or election of God; or the choice of grace, like that of his people; but the choice of *Infinite Wisdom*, resting upon an object infinitely suitable and worthy: so, when the penitent, seeking the hope of salvation, considers the ends for which he was appointed, his ability to accomplish them, and the blessings which are, as revealed in the word of truth, treasured up in him, such an act of believing total dependence commends itself to his understanding and his conscience, as suitable to his own state and the Redeemer's all-sufficiency.—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," is the testimony of the Spirit of truth. He is worthy, O believing penitent, of all thy dependence; because he is suited to all thy wants, and appointed, in the counsels of eternity, to supply them. Thou art sinful, and he can pardon thee; guilty, and he can justify thee; unholy, and he can sanctify thee; weak, and he can strengthen thee; afar off, and he can bring thee near; surrounded with enemies, and in him is thy strength and victory. He can keep thee within the sacred presence of a reconciled God and Father; conduct thee through all, and crown his grace with glory. He is chosen and designated to do all these things for thee; yes, "for all who come unto God by him;" and he is able to do all these



things “even to the uttermost.” Let us, then, in holy joy and ecstasy, join the sentiment and language of the Apostle, and determine “to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified:”—to account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord,—to suffer the loss of all things, rather than of him—desiring to be found in him, *having on his righteousness*, and not our own, because it is the *righteousness of our God* and Saviour, i. e. of God’s working out, of God’s appointment, and approved of God, for the justification of a sinner, *by faith*. (See Phil. iii. 8, &c.)

In vain shall the guilty sinner seek any other way of justification and salvation. This hath God irrevocably determined. The choice, the decree, the determination, of God cannot be changed; nor can the sinner expect safety in resisting those, unless “he has an arm like God, and can thunder with a voice like his;” for “there is salvation in no other, neither any other name under heaven whereby we must be saved.”—Whatever is exalted, either in whole or in part, as the foundation of our dependence, is exalted in opposition to God’s determination and appointment; in opposition to the person and work of Christ. What, then, must be the result? God will glorify his Son Jesus, and maintain the honour of his own appointment, in trying to the uttermost every pretended confidence, and in destroying every high thought which exalts itself against him.—Redemption is complete in its acquisition; sinners who stand in need, and who feel their need, are invited to receive freely, but not to bring—to receive as empty supplicants, not to bring as rich and self-sufficient. “He filleth the hungry with good things, but the rich he sendeth empty away.” (Luke i. 53.) All which remains for the sinner to do is, if made truly sensible of his needy guilty state, to be as truly willing to receive his complete salvation. Good works and spiritual duties are the effects of this salvation enjoyed in the heart, and not the cause of its bestowal. “The grace of God, bringing salvation,” teaches the self-denying lessons of obedience. He who

has experienced the grace of Christ, who knows his character and offices, and has found the enjoyment of his blessings, will both love, and delight to obey, him. But he knows that the grace of the eternal covenant is the fountain of his salvation; that it is the grace of Christ alone to which he is indebted for its acquisition; and the grace of the Eternal Spirit to which he owes its application and enjoyment, together with the disposition to receive and enjoy, and to love and serve, the Saviour; and in all his duties, under a consciousness of manifold defects and great infirmity, it is through the blood and righteousness of Jesus that he hopes for their acceptance.

While, then, the highest believer finds nothing in himself of a holy and spiritual tendency (see Rom. vii. 14 to the end), he rejoices in the consolation, that God has appointed that he should expect and find all spiritual grace and blessing in a continued supply in Christ. Here, then, I would come daily to realize the privilege. Oh! let believers all unite to give the blessed Redeemer the glory which the Father thus puts upon him, by a total dependence on his grace and faithfulness. Our Jesus, Jehovah our salvation, has perfected what he was chosen to do; and the wisdom, and all the attributes, of Godhead, which were displayed in his election to all his offices, shall be justified in the final event: that wisdom and those attributes shall be magnified in the ultimate and complete accomplishment of the grand design. As all the blessings of salvation are in him, they are secured to the application of faith. I feel my wants, and bless him for teaching me to feel them. Let me, then, believe his word, and trust that he will be to me what he has promised to be to his people. Let it be my fixed choice to stand before God in Christ, and in no other. Every thing beside will be as insufficient to satisfy the conscience of a sinner, as it is to satisfy the law, the justice, and the truth, of God. Failing in these great points, it must fail in the work of justification, and can only distress the enlightened conscience. Ignorance alone can

be satisfied. And when some degree of light and knowledge discovers its insufficiency, if it do not lead to Christ, it will only perplex the doubtful mind still more, and secure the destruction of the self-confident. In Christ alone the blessings of grace are treasured; from him they freely flow to the humble, penitent, and believing, suppliant; and flow abundantly to the steady faith of the settled believer. “Lord, increase our faith,” that we may trust in thee, receive from thee, and be thankful. “Unto whom should we go (blessed Jesus) but unto thee; thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe, and are sure, that thou art the Christ,” the Anointed of God, the Treasury of saving power and blessings.

But then shall he realize all his offices, to which he has been chosen of God, when he comes again in his glory,—

As the Judge of quick and dead, to which office he is chosen, in order to sum up all the counsels and purposes of the everlasting covenant. As the great Creator, he comes with a sovereign right to resume what he has given, to destroy what he himself had formed. But he comes also in our nature, as the Son of man; and in that nature in which he suffered, he will display his glory, and punish his enemies. In this nature he is spoken of as receiving the office from the Father. “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.” (John v. 22.) This view of the Lord Jesus is used as the most forcible argument for repentance, because “God will send Jesus, which before was preached unto you.” And, “he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained.” (Acts iii. 19—21, and xvii. 31.) By those “terrors of the Lord we are to persuade men:” “For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” (2 Cor. v. 10.) But it is as “*the Son of man*” that “he shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, and shall sit upon



the throne of his glory, and gather before him all nations, to separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats," &c. (See Matt. xxv. 31, &c.)

Thus is this glorious and mysterious Person chosen of God, as the great Angel, or Agent, in carrying on all things, according to the covenant of grace, in the concerns of the world and of the church; in the mysterious conduct of Providence, or the purposes of love to his people; and to be the All in all before God, and in the sinner's salvation. And he hath, therefore, decreed, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." (John v. 23.) What a very different view does this present to us of the character of this *wonderful* Mediator, than what is generally entertained? If these things are true, we are constrained to form a very different judgment of him from those who deny his essential Godhead, or degrade the glories of *Immanuel*, this "*Word made flesh*," this "*God with us*," into the feebleness of a mere fallible creature. He who is appointed to works like these, with power capable of executing them, must be none other than "*Jehovah* our Redeemer"—"*Jehovah* our Righteousness and Strength"—"The great God our Saviour." Review the works of creation and redemption, and say, who else could speak *nothing* into existence! Who else could ransom with an infinite price, or new-create, with Almighty power, a lost and ruined world! See him again calling all creation before his tribunal, and, as the resurrection and the life, awakening and summoning the dead! Behold how his piercing eye penetrates and unveils the hearts of men; how, with omniscient intelligence, he searches the hearts and the reins! Behold, how "he brings to light the hidden things of darkness," from the beginning of the creation, and "brings every secret work into judgment:" and finally closes the solemn scene by the word of his power, casting down the fallen angels and rebellious men into the pit of everlasting destruction, and welcoming and instating all his people in the possession of his kingdom!

Shall the eternal Jehovah choose a creature to perform these acts of Divine power, and thus give his glory to another? We may boldly ask, Can any creature be rendered capable of such displays and exertions of wisdom and of power as these? In this case, wherein would the infinite Creator differ from, or excel, his creature? Where infinite wisdom and infinite power are necessary, there the Majesty of Godhead must shine forth, and God must have all the glory.

The honour which God puts upon the appointed Mediator is often contrasted with the disregard and disrepute which dishonoured him from man—"Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree, him hath God exalted with his right hand"—Whom ye have refused, God hath made "the Head of the corner." But, now, the honour of his choice shall be vindicated in the glorified and reigning Redeemer. And what a consolation may it afford to the humble believer, conscious of innumerable frailties at best, and manifold imperfections, that He who is the Saviour is *elected* as the Judge; He who so loved the church as to give himself for it! Pleasing thought! The Redeemer of lost sinners shall be the Judge of the assembled world,—yea, He whom thou hast loved—in whom thou hast believed—in whom thou hast trusted—to whom thou hast committed the keeping of thy soul—whose grace is thy salvation! And he hath declared it to be "the will of the Father, that of all which he hath given him he should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." "This," says he, again, "is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I *will* raise him up at the last day." (John vi. 39, 40.) When, therefore, he comes again, he will assume his glory: he will vindicate the honours which he has received from God; will justify the appointment of the eternal counsels in the fulfilment of his work; and will glorify all his redeemed people, and shall receive from each and from all of them the eternal glory and praise! Now, then, we will anticipate the sweet employ, and give

him the honour which is his due, by believing, trusting, praising, and serving, the appointed Lord and Saviour. This must be the effect of experiencing his grace; for, while love draws the heart to him, it will lead all its powers into obedience. Shall we not love Him who hath so loved us? Shall we not serve Him with a pure heart fervently, who, at such expense of love and suffering, served us, and became the Servant of God for us? Shall we not be obedient to Him who was obedient, even to death, for us? Shall we not walk so as to please Him who pleased not himself, that he might redeem our souls to God? and aim to be like Him, who once became like us, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, that he might secure our deliverance from sin and sorrow, and bring eternal redemption? Well might the Apostle beseech us, by the mercies of God, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ. Without this, whatever profession we may make, we know not the grace of God in truth; we can know nothing of Jesus as the Saviour, unless we have experienced the power of his salvation in deliverance from guilt, and from the dominion, love, and practice of sin. Weigh well these serious considerations, ye, who, amidst great profession, are careless of the Saviour's honour, and disinclined to his princely authority. When he is the choice of our hearts, he will be the object of our supreme delight and universal submission. When quickened by his grace, we shall reckon ourselves to be "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord;" and, "being made free from sin, and become servants to God, shall have our fruit unto holiness, till the end be everlasting life."

Blessed, then, be the eternal Jehovah, the ever glorious Three in One, who, in the counsels of eternity, chose the mighty Saviour, and treasured up all grace in him for the salvation of ruined sinners. There let my faith rest; from him may I receive all, and in him may I be ever found, when viewed by the eye of an infinitely holy God. Then shall I stand with confidence before the throne, for he him-



self shall be my Judge. And having chosen him whom God has chosen, for the purpose for which God has appointed him in my salvation, God shall glorify his wisdom and his truth in having made such an appointment by the fulfilment of those purposes, and in answering those expectations of my faith, which his word has warranted. Then, in the enjoyment of all the blessings of salvation, eternal praise shall flow to the ever blessed Jehovah, in concert with all the multitude of redeemed sinners, for the fulfilment of all the purposes of redemption, in the person and work of the Lord Jesus; when the great mystery shall be complete, the counsels of grace finished, and the top-stone of the spiritual building shall be laid, crying, “Grace, grace unto it!”

## ESSAY IX.

**Eagle.**

THE parental affection and the tender care of this sovereign of birds over its young ones, are employed by the Lord to represent his unremitting care over Israel of old, and his powerful protection of them and of all his church to the end of time. While nature is thus used in Scripture as the emblem of grace, the enlightened and believing mind, by the most common things around, finds its thoughts continually directed to the Lord the Redeemer, and sees in every thing the shadows of his love, and care, and power.

The bird of prey spreading its wings to protect its defenceless brood, while flying to it for shelter, and nestling beneath its shadow, may direct our thoughts to the eternal, covenant, and unchangeable love of the ever-blessed Jehovah, in all its rich displays in the person of Jesus, and all its gracious effects in the dispensation of the Gospel. Such is the figure which the Lord himself uses when he led out his chosen people from the land of Egyptian captivity; when he wrought his miracles before them, led them through the wilderness, and, as the Angel-Jehovah, who is undoubtedly the Lord Jesus Christ, drove out the nations from before them, brought them in, and gave them possession of the promised Canaan,—the type of that love which shall bring his spiritual Israel through to glory: “As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead him.” (Deut. xxxii. 11, 12.) While our meditations dwell on

this delightful subject, may He rest over us, in the sweet refreshing shade of covenant and everlasting love, protecting power, and reviving grace ! There may we sweetly rest in faith, till he has led us forward and brought us safe to the heavenly inheritance !

Naturalists inform us, that this ferocious bird is peculiarly attentive to her young during the time in which they stand in need of her attention ; and that when her young ones are of proper age, she hovers over the nest in which they lie, flutters with her wings in order to excite them to imitate her, and to take their flight. When thus allured to the attempt, if the feeble and unskilful practitioner become weary or fearful, she takes them upon her back and carries them aloft, always placing them in such a situation as to secure their safety, and so protecting them that the fowler shall not be able to injure them without piercing through her own body.

Such are the circumstances to which the allusion is made ; and they undoubtedly present to us a most interesting display of the love of Jesus to the young, to the feeble, to the weakest of his flock, of the tenderness and faithfulness of his heart, and the security of his people, under the ideas of *parental affection*, *parental care*, and *parental power*.

*Parental affection* is generally and justly considered as the tenderest and most unequivocal. The natural instinct of the brute creation is spontaneous and unfailing ; while needful, it is peculiarly sensible, though afterwards Providence has wisely ordered that it should quickly cease. We call an unfeeling parent brutal ; but, indeed, there is no resemblance of such an one in any of the brute creation, unless it be the ostrich, which is generally considered as such. The beautiful and striking description of this bird in the book of Job seems to justify the comparison : she “ leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers : but her labour



is in vain without fear, because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding." (Job xxxix. 14—17.)

Naturalists, however, have supposed, that this is only a poetical application of the well-known circumstance of her actually leaving her eggs and young ; and that she, nevertheless, watches them with attention, though being herself too large to sit upon them without destroying them : she therefore leaves them in the burning sand, and covers them there, till the heat of the sandy bed produces them into life. They then experience but little of parental care ; and the insensible bird is, indeed, the solitary emblem of many more brutal parents among the rational part of creation—viz. mankind. Among these the parental affection is, however, generally as strong, and much more wise and lasting ; as the order of nature requires ; since man, the noblest work of the Creator, in his present fallen situation continues the longest in a state of imbecility, and is the slowest in his advances to the independence and perfection of his nature.

The love of Jesus is, however, but feebly represented by the strongest affection in creation : all excellencies are in him. He is the Archetype, the Fountain of them all. Yea, He is those excellencies : they constitute his essential nature. Whatsoever we possess, we derive from him : he himself is the best pattern ; and the more we are assimilated to him, the more shall we shine in every grace and virtue.

Let us, then, take a short view of this parental affection of his heart to his chosen people.

In his eternal counsels he chose his people for himself; and they were given to him of the Father to redeem and save. By an act of sovereign grace he adopted them into his family, and "pledged his heart" to maintain their interest in earth and heaven. And, "because they are sons, the Father" (in time) "sends forth the spirit of his Son into their hearts." (Gal. iv. 6.) Thus, by an act of sovereign power and love, he makes sinners his children : they are

born into his family, with the temper and disposition, and into the privileges, of children. This is the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, the necessity of which our Lord has stated in the most absolute terms: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven." This, therefore, is a change which must and does pass upon all his people; the effect of Sovereign love, but preceding the discovery of his Fatherly love to them. The working of his heart when contemplating and arranging the wonderful design of mercy, is beautifully represented by the Prophet (Jer. iii. 19): "But I said, *How* shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? And I said, Thou shalt call me, *My Father*, and shalt not turn away from me;"—that is, I will change thy rebellious disposition into a filial submission, and then welcome thee to all the blessings of my house. Thus he dealt with the penitent returning prodigal, the encouraging emblem of his willing reception of the repenting sinner. (Compare Luke xv. 11—32.) When, convinced of sin, and humbled under the conviction, the contrite penitent beholds his need of Christ, discovers his suitableness and glory, and flies to him for refuge, he shall never be rejected. For though "*the Scripture hath concluded all under sin,*" it is "*that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them who believe.*" And when the Law, as our schoolmaster, has led us unto Christ, it is that we might be justified by faith, and thus "become the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus." Faith, actually uniting us to the Son of God, constitutes us children as in him, and entitles us to the blessings of his family. And it is in the exercise of faith that his people become conscious of their new character and relation, and know and exult in their privilege, "crying, *Abba, Father.*" (Gal. iv. 6.) Let us well ascertain this important change, and we may with holy confidence expect every blessing of covenant love made over to such in the infallible promises of the Gospel. Here is the only essential difference

amongst mankind: it is this secures the manifestation and enjoyment of his favour. This is the effect, and therefore the decisive evidence, of the everlasting love of his heart (Jer. xxxi. 3); and the pledge and token of the fulness of his salvation. (Rom. v. 10.) But where is love like this? "He loved the church, and gave himself for it." While his love is represented by such emblems, it rises infinitely above every comparison. What love can equal that which fixed upon ruined sinners as the objects of all its wonderful displays? that pledged itself for the work of redemption from sin, and death, and hell? What love can equal the depth of his humiliation, or where is love which has so displayed its energies? What love can ever bear comparison with the humility of his incarnation, when he who was in the form of God took upon himself the form of a servant; with the wonders of his condescension, the sorrows of his life, the sufferings of Gethsemane, and the agonies of the cross? This is the mystery of love which "angels desire to look into." In the greatness of his love he laments even over the rebellious and hardened sinner; and, while his providence repeatedly warns, while his spirit repeatedly checks, while he waits to be gracious, he weeps over their obstinacy and folly, and can justly say, "How often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

In the greatness of his love, he bore with the sins and provocations of his own people from time to time, (O wonderful forbearance!) through the long years of their ungeneracy and rebellion. He still bears with their infirmities and weakness, and their many backslidings, with love and compassion still more wonderful; and "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." (Psa. ciii. 8—14.) Yea, the fond mother may forget her sucking child, and not have compassion upon the son of her womb; but the love of Jesus admits no change;



and suffers no diminution : he is “ Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” “ I the Lord,” says he, “ change not : therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” He who bought his people with his blood, who gave his life the offering and the sacrifice for their sins, who has purchased them out of the hand of the enemy, and redeemed the forfeited inheritance for them, by the blood and price of his cross, and by the power of his arm, will bring them to himself by grace, and near himself in glory. All love, in comparison with his, is but as the scanty rivulet to the boundless ocean. The one limited within the narrow sphere of mortality, the other immense as the Eternal Mind,—the one temporary and transitory, the other from everlasting to everlasting, and infinite as himself.

But parental love is productive of

*Parental care.* The attention of the parent bird to its yet defenceless young, especially that of the eagle, is as striking an emblem of the condescending care of Jesus over his people as nature could afford. It implies the most delicate sensibility, and the most minute and unwearied observation. It, with beautiful exactness, symbolizes the superintendence of his Providence around them, and the constant abiding of his grace and Spirit within them, to fulfil his purposes of love towards them. Every circumstance which is noticed by the inspired writer in the passage where the allusion is made, presents to the mind some striking analogy, some additional trait, in the love of Jesus, some further representation of the grace of his heart, to engage our faith, confidence, and affection.

While the young are in the nest, with outspread wings she nourishes and preserves them. “ SHE STIRRETH UP HER NEST, FLUTTERETH OVER HER YOUNG, SPREAD-ETH ABROAD HER WINGS.” Thus with tender concern the Lord Jesus Christ looks on his young converts, who may justly be considered as the little children, the infants, of his family : the consolations which he affords them are neither few nor small. And as they are too weak to live

much by faith, they are often indulged with those happy frames and sensible comforts which animate their zeal and love, and which they are too apt to consider as the only proofs of Divine favour, and upon the continuance of which they too often presume with inexperienced confidence. In the language of the Apostle, He treats them “as carnal,” (that is) not, “carnally minded, which is death,” but too much attached to sense and sensible things, “EVEN AS BABES IN CHRIST.” He feeds them with the milk of his sensible consolation, and not with the strong meat of his Divine truth, which requires their faith and patience, while they are not able to bear it. (1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.) In another very similar figure he is sweetly represented as “bearing the lambs in his arms, and carrying them in his bosom” (Isaiah xl. 11), graciously nourishing them with the consolations of his ever-loving heart; and, with the discovery of that love by the immediate influences of his Spirit, graciously screening them from trials and temptations, while he sees that they would be too much for their weak faith, and overturn their feeble, though regenerate, and warmly affectioned, spirits. Thus he dealt with Israel of old. (See Exod. xiii. 17.) “And it came to pass that when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt.” He does not call them to trying exercises, till a little more experience and observation, and the knowledge of the experiences of many chosen saints of God, have prepared them in some measure to expect, and arm their hearts against, them. Then let them not be surprised if those sensible comforts, which were perhaps much mingled with animal affections, begin to decline, and the sincerity of faith and love is put to the test by inward and outward conflict.

When of proper age, the parent eagle tempts her young ones from their downy nest, to try their wings in the vast expanse of air, in which they are destined hereafter to ex-

ercise themselves in still more bold and daring flights; and to maintain their superiority over the feathered tribe. So, in due time, faith must be tried; but faithful is the promise, “AS THY DAY IS, THY STRENGTH SHALL BE;” “*the trial of faith*” is not, as the astonished and feeble believer too often apprehends, for its difficulty, but its confirmation; and “*being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, it shall be found to praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*”

As storms clear the sky, and the darkest clouds come loaded with showers of blessings, so the storms of temptation, and the darkest hours of the believer, are all working for good; often discernible in this life, upon the review; often attended with immediate good effect in humiliation, faith, and love, but assuredly so in the grand aggregate, when reviewed from the borders of the heavenly kingdom.

The parent eagle watches her young ones in their original attempts at flight; and, when she perceives them weary or fearful, “*she spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings.*”

Thus when faith is being exercised, “the eyes of the Lord are over his people, and his ears are open to their cry.” When sometimes, like the afflicted pattern of patience, Job, they go forward, but the Lord is not there; and backward, but cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he seemeth to be working on the behalf of others, but cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that they cannot see him, then their faith begins to yield, and sink into fearful despondency: but, if they cannot discern *him*, his eye is upon *them*; “he knoweth the part which they take, and, when he has tried them, they shall come forth as gold.” (Job xxiii. 8—10.) When thus by a practical discovery of their own weakness and dependence, he has quickened their cry to him for help, then he will fulfil his promise: “They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them; and it shall come to pass, that, before they call, while yet



the sincere purpose is in their labouring heart, "I will answer, and, while they are yet speaking, I will hear." The closet shall savour of the delights of heaven, and the yet unfinished prayer shall be broken off to begin the song of praise. Where is the believer that has not many a time found in these instances the faithfulness of his God, and cannot bear his testimony to the truth of the promises? Where is the believer whose heart has not been thus unexpectedly lifted up in the midst of trouble, when ready to sink, while crying for help, while waiting at the throne, and looking again, as its last refuge, towards his holy temple? (See Jonah ii. 4.) Blessed be the Lord for this unspeakable grace, and for the faithful promises which afford the alone, but the certain, security of its communication to all his people.

But, whatever we admire in the parental character, shines with a brighter lustre, yea in absolute perfection, in our adorable Jesus.

The tenderness, pity, and compassion, of a parent's heart, are the true but feeble emblems of his kind compassions to his people. This he has beautifully represented in the language of the Prophet: "He said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie; so he was their Saviour. In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his Presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." (Isa. lxiii. 9.) He cannot look upon them unconcerned; he sympathises with their pains, feels their sorrows, and bears their burdens. And they are therefore called to "cast their burden upon the Lord, because he will sustain them" (Psa. lv. 22); and to "cast all their care upon him, because he careth for them." (1 Pet. v. 7.) A father's heart will often endure in a child, with patience and forbearance, those weaknesses and infirmities which would weary out others, who are not so nearly related, or so naturally and affectionately solicitous for their welfare. Parental love will lament over those evils which others would condemn; and endeavour to

remedy those dispositions which would induce the contempt or neglect of all beside.

Thus the forbearance of the Saviour is represented, by his not breaking the bruised reed, or quenching the smoking flax. (Isa. xlii. 1, &c.) Whoever may despise, he will not “DESPISE THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS.” (Zech. iv. 6—10.) When grace is but as the grain of mustard-seed, it as assuredly engages his attention, and secures his regard, as when flourishing with all its fruits on the wide-spreading tree of the perfected believer. He will water it with the dews of heaven, and shine upon it with the beams of his light and heat; aid and support the feeble plant, raise up the drooping head, defend it from the inclement storm, and supply its vital moisture from himself, the ever-living root, till it flourish in everlasting vigour and beauty, in his paradise above.

The Plant of Grace its head shall raise,  
Water'd by ceaseless streams of grace;  
The church its prosperous state shall see,  
Till fruits of glory load the tree.

This beautiful emblem still illustrates and confirms these encouraging views; for

When the parent bird takes her unfledged and timid young ones on her wings, we are told that she carefully places them in such a manner, that the fowler shall not be able to injure them, without piercing through her own body, and willingly exposes herself to secure them. Who does not here immediately recollect Him who “was made under the law, to redeem us who were under the law;” who “redeemed us from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for us;” who “became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;” who “bare our sins in his own body on the tree,” and was therefore “wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, upon whom the chastisement of our peace was laid, that by his stripes we might be healed;” “whom it pleased the Father to bruise, and to put to grief, because

he made his soul an offering for (our) sin?" Here let us stand and admire the Saviour's unequalled love! far beyond the utmost affection of all created nature!

The emblem is striking and just; but it is feeble, and inadequate. The most tender anxiety, the most determined zeal and courage, will often appear in the weakest of the animal tribe, when quickly casting themselves before their young, or spreading their wings to defend them when assaulted by any enemy. The faithful and affectionate mother will rather die, than desert her care, or suffer their injury or destruction. But such was the love, the zeal, the ardour of the Lord our Saviour, that to defend and save his people he *did die*: when assaulted by our enemy, "he gave his life for us;" himself becoming the offering and the sacrifice for his church. The blood of his atonement is the covering and sure protection of his people, from every destroying foe, like the blood of the Passover sprinkled on the doors of the Israelites, which protected them from the sword of the destroying enemy, that smote the first-born in every house beside. Some have supposed, that the same elegant figure is beautifully used in the narration of that event, in Exodus xii. 23\*, from the description of it given by the inspired writer, "For Jehovah will pass through to smite the Egyptians:" here is Jehovah the Destroyer, the Minister of Justice: "*And when he seeth the blood upon the lintels, and on the two side-posts, Jehovah will pass over the door,*" or *project himself before the door*;—here is Jehovah the Saviour and Deliverer, like the faithful and affectionate mother-bird darting itself before its young, casting himself before the door of the favoured house, protected by the blood of the covenant, and interposing himself between the sword of justice and the ransomed race;—"and (*Jehovah, the Deliverer*) *will not suffer (Jehovah) the Destroyer to come in unto your houses to destroy you.*" (See Exod. xii. 23.)

The parent bird will by all means endeavour to pro-

\* See Lowth on Isaiah xxxi. 5.



vide for her helpless young, while unable to procure their own provision. With what assiduous and unremitting attention does she fly to and fro continually, on the search for the scattered morsels which supply their food! Even the devouring raven will forget her voracious appetite, to supply her unfledged brood. And shall the Lord put greater solicitude into brutes for their young, than himself possesses for his people? Shall not the Lord Jesus Christ, the “*everlasting Father*” of his covenant people, provide for all their wants, while unable and unskilful to provide for themselves? Yes, even in temporal things, the promise secures a needful supply: “Bread shall be given them, their water shall be sure:” “No good thing will the Lord withhold.” But the promises of spiritual blessings are *exceedingly great and precious*. “How great is that goodness which the Lord has *laid up* for them that fear him; which he has *wrought out* for them that trust in him, before the sons of men!” (Psa. xxxi. 19.) Are they destitute and helpless? “Where the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord Jehovah will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in the high places; and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.” (Isa. xli. 17, &c.) Hence the command for the confidence of faith; “Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee, with the right hand of my righteousness.” (ver. 10.) He will provide for them both in body and soul, till he present them all before the Throne in the language of exultation, at his own *final triumph over sin, death, and hell*: “*Behold, I and the children which thou hast given me:*” “OF ALL THAT THOU HAST GIVEN ME I HAVE LOST NOTHING.”

This conduct towards them, indeed, is that of a wise as well as an affectionate parent. No excess of fondness, the offspring of folly, and the parent of misery, can in-

fluence him to yield to the ignorant cravings of their yet too carnal hearts; or to grant what he sees evil for them, though, magnified by the corrupt inclinations of a deceitful heart into a most important good, it engages the earnest longing of their minds. He knows how graciously to deny what he cannot mercifully bestow; and oftentimes withholds that dangerous blessing which he sees would eventually become the most fatal curse.

While, therefore, his infinite loving-kindness consults their good, his wisdom directs the means, and by all his providences and spiritual communications he accomplishes the end. The simplicity of man often mistakes his design, and the mind of his people is perplexed by a partial view of the intermediate circumstances; but faith now teaches us to attribute wisdom to the Lord, and in the end he will justify the confidence of faith, and approve all his dispensations to the redeemed multitude above, when he “comes to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.”

What a pleasing view does this subject afford us of the loving-kindness of our Redeemer! When brought by his grace to him, how cheerfully may we trust our all with him, and trust in him for all! He that had mercy on them will lead his church through the wilderness. When he led his chosen tribes from the house of their Egyptian bondage, he spread his protecting wing over and around them, in the visible representation of the cloudy and the fiery pillar. “The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them in the way; and by night, in a pillar of fire to give them light; to go by day and night; he took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.” (Exod. xiii. 21, 22.)

Through this he provided for them; by this he led and directed them in the way; and by this he defended them; and when their enemies approached, and they began to tremble with unbelief, “the Angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed, and went behind them;



and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them; and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud of darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these; so that one came not near the other," &c. (Exod. xiv. 19, 20.)

We cannot but observe the admirable suitableness of this provision when we consider the situation of the places through which the Israelites were to pass—through a dreary, sandy, burning desert, without a tree to shelter, or a cloud to screen them from the scorching sun; or, if we consider the circumstances of their nation—a small handful of men, comparatively, pursued by the then most powerful nation upon earth, surrounded by others who looked upon them with jealous envy and hatred, and marching against others whom they were totally to extirpate and destroy. But by this means he led and secured his ancient people; and thus, through seas of trouble, through the dreary wilderness of a sinful disordered world, surrounded with enemies on every hand, and carrying the worst within, he now spiritually leads and guides his church. His providence, like the cloudy pillar, affords them their continual shelter; his Spirit, like the pillar of fire, is their light, and joy, and faithful director. The Angel of his Presence is their invincible defender; and his rich supplies attend them all the way, and bless them with the bread of support, and the water of consolation; till, all their enemies being vanquished, they possess the promised Canaan which is above, the land of *rest* and *glory*.

Under the same tender allusion the Lord represented his solicitude for Jerusalem's protection, the true emblem of his covenant care over the church to the end of time. There is in it, no doubt, a reference to the circumstances of the Paschal deliverance in the land of Egypt. "As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem: defending, also, he will deliver it," (his forbearance shall



be effectual); “and passing over,” (or, casting himself like the parent bird before its young,) “he will preserve it.” (Isa. xxxi. 5.)

This, again, was evidently the design of that grand mystery of every former dispensation, *the cherubic image*, which was a four-fold presence of the most excellent animals. The *Ox*, the *Man* (Ezek. x. 14), *the Lion*, and *the Eagle* (Ezek. i. 10), uniting in one body, and spreading their wings (that is, the Eagle’s) on either side\*. (See Exod. xxxvii. 9; xxv. 20; 1 Kings viii. 7.) This is expressly said to be a representation of the God of Israel, in the description given of it in Ezek. ch. x. The sound of the cherubim’s wings was “as the voice of the Almighty God.” (ver. 5.) They guided the wheels of providence by infinite wisdom; for “their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about” (ver. 12). “This,” says the Prophet, (ver. 20,) “is the living creature that I saw (ראה) under (rather, as the *representation of*) *the God of Israel*, by the river of Chebar.” Of this vision we have a description in chapter i., and he there expressly calls it “*the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord*.” In this, the *Ox* is considered as the emblem of the Father; the *Lion* and *Man*, which are always united, of the Son taking our nature into personal union with the Divine; and the *Eagle*, of the Spirit, expanding his influence in all the work of God. This was the mystic figure placed in the holy of holies, above the ark and the propitiatory. The priest, on the great day of atonement, represented in the vision by the man clothed in linen, ministered by these, and there presented the blood of atonement, and the sweet incense, the type of the blood of Jesus and his all-prevalent intercession in our nature in the heavens; from thence, then, for acceptance they all looked down with delight on the memorial of the dying rising Saviour’s work; and the manifestations of Divine favour were vouchsafed

\* See the description of the Cherubim in Parkhurst’s Hebr. Lex.

to the priest, and at some particular seasons spread itself visibly throughout the temple.—(1 Kings viii. 10, 11.) “And it came to pass, that when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister, because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord.” The cherubim were therefore the typical representation of the God of Israel, Jehovah Aleim, the Three in covenant, typically reconciled by the atoning blood and the fuming incense\*. Hence we see the design of the term, “to dwell under the wings of the cherubim,” was but another expression for abiding under the care of a reconciled God and Father in Christ Jesus, where is perfect safety and heavenly bliss. Hence in that beautiful language of supplication to the God of grace, in the midst of the same dark and afflicting circumstances of the Jewish church, the faith of the Psalmist is supported by the consideration of this peculiar fact; “Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock, thou that dwellest between the cherubim, (or rather, inhabitest the cherubim, thou covenant God of grace,) shine forth.” (Psa. lxxx. 1.) And there is a frequent allusion to the same encouraging representation of the God of Israel throughout the sacred records; especially in the Book of Psalms. (See Psa. lvii. 1, &c.) Here let me find my security beneath these Eagles’ wings, spread out by covenant love for the shadow and protection of his people. But it is the peculiarity of this emblem, that it equally represents

*Parental power and ability*, to promote the peace and establish the security of the church.—It is worthy of our observation, to whatsoever species of animals the Lord Jesus Christ is compared, it is always to the best of each: if he be compared to any of the animal tribe, it is to the lion, the king of beasts; and He is, indeed, the lion of the tribe of Judah (Isa. xxxi. 4); or to the eagle, the king of

\* Every other interpretation appears to me far beneath the description which is every where given in Scripture of this mystic figure.

birds, the most powerful in its strength, the most rapid and elevated in its flight, darting from the highest eminence it attains, with inconceivable swiftness, to defend its young, or to provide its prey. Its celerity is used, therefore, to mark the rapidity of time: "Our days are passed away as the swift ships; as the eagle that hasteth to the prey." (Job ix. 26.) The uncertainty of riches is represented by the same allusion: "They make themselves wings, and flee away as an eagle towards heaven." (Prov. xxiii. 5.) Also the violence and haste of enraged enemies: "Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of heaven." (Lam. iv. 19.)

The eagle is used as the most suitable representation of the most mighty monarchs. Thus the king of Babylon is represented by "a great eagle with great wings, long-winged, full of feathers, which had divers colours, coming to Lebanon, and taking the highest branch of the cedar"—that is, the king and princes of Israel. (Ezek. xvii. 3—11.) The king of Egypt is also represented by the same emblem (ver. 7; comp. Jer. xlviii. 40). But how much more noble is the comparison used to represent the almighty power of our Jesus, the infinity of his wisdom, the quickness of his help! The care of our Lord is the care of one who has ability to execute his designs of love, to avenge his people, to destroy their enemies, to nourish and support them, to defend and protect them to everlasting victory.

Let us admire and adore the goodness of God, in condescending to teach us such glorious truths by such well-known emblems in nature, so plain, but yet so beautiful. We are very dull of perception, we have but little spiritual wisdom, or, after all these familiar displays of his power and grace in his Word, we should behold him, and see his excellencies pourtrayed, in all things around us. The rock would lead us to the recollection of his stability, the mountain would give us the idea of his faithfulness, the ocean of the immensity of his love; the affectionate mother would remind us of his tenderness; the lamb sweetly insinuate to us his innocence and purity; the lion raise our conceptions of his almighty power and victories for us; and all



the feeble virtue of human nature, which we so admire in man, would lead us to contemplate the perfections of him who is the sum of infinite excellency.

By such emblems the Lord Jesus Christ conveyed his personal instructions; and by such his word in general condescends to our infirmities, and represents to our sense the glorious objects of faith.

This is thy Jesus, O believer, mighty to save, able to save unto the uttermost! The eagle is said at a certain time to cast his feathers, and to appear again in all the beauty and vigour of its youth: hence the promise to the believer in Christ, "Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." (Psa. ciii. 5.) But this is only from his union with Him who ever lives before the throne of God, who is eternally the same; "JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER;" and by which his spiritual life is secured, and his spiritual vigour renewed again to life eternal.

Let, then, the birds of the air reprove our want of faith, and the simplicity of our conduct. For such purposes the Lord of nature employs them, when he would direct us to the providential care of our heavenly Father. (Matt. vi. 26.) Let them also direct us to Him. Observe, at the approach of danger, how the young brood press under the sheltering wing that welcomes them beneath its covert: there they expect all their safety, there they delight to hide. And shall not we press under the wings of the cherubim, the wings of covenant love, of a reconciled God in Christ Jesus, where all the Divine Persons stand pledged for our salvation? Sprinkled with the atoning blood, they look down propitious, and spread the wings of power and tenderness for our defence and delight. There let us bring all our concerns, there they will be placed in security. They are the safest in his hands, under his power, and the guidance of his wisdom. Now we may boldly enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; not where the Divine emblems reside, but the Divine glory itself. The wings of the eagle are not so strong, nor its affections so great.

“Keep me” (then, O blessed Jesus!) “as the apple of the eye: hide me under the *shadow of thy wings*.” I will say with the holy confidence of faith, “Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the *shadow of thy (cherubic) wings* will I make my refuge, (O thou covenant God of grace,) until all these calamities (of life) be overpast.” It was to this protection that the upright Boaz welcomed the Moabitish stranger, Ruth, when he said, “The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.” (Ruth ii. 12; compare chap. i. 16.)

In all circumstances of trial let us fly here, and rejoice in his salvation: under his eye, under his shadow, we cannot but be safe. In the midst of the wilderness, surrounded with enemies, feeble and helpless, here is almighty protection. This, perhaps, is the import of that beautiful promise, “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.” (Isa. xl. 31; compare Zeph. iii. 16, 17.) Taken on the shoulders of his almighty power, on the wings of redeeming love, none can hurt his people, unless they can destroy himself. They shall mount to the throne of God, for he is able to place them there; able to perform that mighty promise, “Where I am, there shall also my people be.”

What a blessed view of our Jesus! Let us press close beneath the wings of his almighty grace, and the Psalmist has directed us how to triumph in our security: “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.” (Psa. xci. 1–4.) The whole Psalm is but the charter of the believer’s privileges, celebrating the security of him who dwells beneath

these cherubic wings of Divine protection. “There is none” (says the triumphing Prophet of Israel) “like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.” (Deut. xxxiii. 26—29.)

Blessed Jesus, draw me to thyself: incline my heart to come beneath thy shade, sweetly extend it over me, and “in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.”



## ESSAY X.

**Bread of Life.**

THE tender compassions of the Redeemer, in the days of his flesh, were often exercised in correspondence with that state of humiliation to which he had condescended. Though the great design of his mission was, the eternal life of dying sinners, yet, while bearing human nature in all its sinless infirmities and wants, he sympathized with those whom he had thus made his *brethren*; and, as the pattern of that universal love which he inculcated, condescended frequently to exert his Divine power for the relief of their meaner wants. Let his disciples learn but to imitate their Master, and their time, talents, abilities, and property will be consecrated to the glory of his great name; cheerfully devoted to the service of mankind, and especially for those who are of the household of faith.

Surrounded by a great company whom the admiration of his miracles had drawn together into the desert, and who had now waited till the close of the day without food, engaged in observing fresh instances of his goodness and power in healing the sick who had been brought to him (see John vi. 1—5; compare Matt. xiv. 14), his feeling mind compassionates their exhausted frames, and determines to afford them relief. He would not send them away when faint and weary; and therefore, as the evidence not only of his grace, but of his Divine power, with *five* barley loaves and *two* small fishes he amply supplies *five thousand*, besides women and children: and then dis-

misses them, no doubt, with his blessing. Struck with the miracle which they had beheld, and of which they had felt the beneficial effects, they are soon assembled again in search of this miraculous Provider, and collected around his person ; but he who had thus interposed to feed them in their necessity would not gratify their indolence or their sensual indulgence. Reviewing the earthliness of their minds, he now reproves their carnality : and, with a wisdom and a grace more than human, and in consistence with the chief design of his mission, takes the opportunity of administering spiritual instruction ; and directing their minds from “ the bread that perisheth ” to that “ which cometh down from heaven ”—“ the Bread of God ”—“ the Living Bread ”—“ the Bread of Life ”—which “ giveth life unto the world ”—which “ endureth unto *eternal life*.” He, whose compassions fed their fainting bodies, would be more delighted to feed their souls. But, alas ! “ the carnal mind knoweth not the things of God.” They who were drawn together by the supply of their bodily wants, were scattered and driven away by the promise of blessings infinitely greater,—are astonished and offended when he points them to *Himself*—his person, work, and blessings—as that which alone can make them alive to God ; and to his *grace*, which is as nourishing, strengthening, salutary, and beneficial to the immortal soul, as bread to the mortal body, and which can support its eternal existence in the eternal enjoyment of God.

The allusion to the *manna*, the miraculous provision of their fathers in the wilderness, might have aided their dull conceptions of Divine and spiritual things, had they not been destitute of all spiritual perception, appetite, or taste. For the soul has its wants, and must have its provision and supply. To the believer, travelling through the wilderness of this world, the communications of grace are as necessary as his daily food, and are constantly refreshing the soul in its way to the heavenly Canaan. O Lord, take away our ignorance : “ evermore give us this bread,” and give us faith to feed upon it for our spiritual

nourishment and joy. Then, under this allusion, we shall see something more of the glory, suitableness, and preciousness, of our *Jesus*; and shall daily delight in him as our *Bread of Life*!

Bread is prepared from corn, which, on account of its various important uses in the support of life, is justly esteemed the most valuable produce of the earth. But it must undergo a variety of processes before it forms that pleasant aliment, that gratifying and nourishing repast, which we call *bread*. All resemblances, indeed, are very inadequate; and the desire of running out into the minutiae of every comparison often renders the whole absurd. Yet, surely this process altogether forms no improper nor unsuitable representation of the work of Christ, by which he has been constituted the *life-giving* Saviour of his people. He himself has directed us thus to pursue the allusion, when comparing his work and its success to the progress of vegetation in a corn of wheat, and its ultimate increase. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it remaineth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John xii. 24.) If he himself could thus represent the circumstances and the effects of his death, why should we hesitate to represent the same, by the various processes by which the same corn is prepared for the food of man?

The first stage of the preparation is by *thrashing*; and the next, by *grinding it to powder*. The ancient method of effecting the first of these—taken as an illustration of that wisdom with which God endues his creatures for their present provision and comfort, and as a reproof of their ignorance and inattention in still more important concerns—is thus described by the Prophet (Isa. xxviii. 28): "Bread corn is bruised (or, thrashed out); because he will not ever be thrashing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen:" that is, he will not thrash it longer than is necessary to loosen the corn from the chaff: he will not break it, or *crush it into*



*the ground*, with the wheel of his cart; nor bruise it *to pieces* with his horsemen. (See Henry on the passage.) \*

After this the corn is *ground to powder*, that it may, by a further process in the labour of man, be adapted to become our food: and, at last, it is prepared still further, by the *operation of fire in the oven*, for our taste and nourishment. Let not the allusions be thought fanciful, when these circumstances are applied to the sorrows of the Redeemer, whereby he finished the work of redemption, and became the Saviour and *life* of his people. “*Bread corn is bruised:*” so was the Redeemer, when, “making his soul an offering for sin,” “it pleased Jehovah to bruise him, and to put him to grief,” that he might be the *Bread of Life* to us. The Psalmist represents the extreme sorrows of the wicked by their being *placed in the fiery oven*, in the time of God’s wrath. And how suitably is this applied to him who endured the curse of sin for all his people; who stood in their place and stead; who “trod the wine-press alone,” &c.; against whom “Jehovah’s (the Father’s) sword awoke,” &c.; who “became sin for us,” &c.; who is properly the great Sufferer, though without spot of sin! “Behold and see if any sorrows were like unto his sorrow; which was done unto him; wherewith the Lord afflicted him in the day of his fierce anger” (Lam. i. 12): “from above he sent fire into his bones,” &c. Fire is the usual emblem of Divine wrath: by it the sacrifices were consumed, and by it the soul of the Redeemer was exercised to the uttermost, when he cried, “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” Here we must contemplate the arduous work, the deep humiliation, the voluntary sorrows, the inflicted sufferings, of the Lord Jesus, by which he was prepared and suited to become the source and supply of our spiritual life. It is

\* The corn was anciently threshed out by a sledge shod with iron, drawn to and fro over it. See the whole passage in Isaiah xxviii. 23—29, which gives us a clear account of the different ways in which the different sorts of grain were anciently prepared for the use of man.

only the crucified and dying Saviour bearing the sentence of the law and the wrath of God ; tried to the uttermost by the severity of Divine justice ; humbled even to death ; that can ever be the object of our faith and hope, as the food of our souls. Without these scenes of sorrow, where justice received its satisfaction, and the wrath was poured out to the uttermost, we could never have approached near to God, never have lived before him, nor have enjoyed the blessings of a spiritual and eternal life. Our blessings were the purchase of his agonies ; our enjoyments, of his broken body and flowing blood ; our life, of his death ; our crown, of his cross ; our glory, of his shame. Let the wonders of thy condescension and sorrows, O thou voluntary suffering Saviour ! be ever the subject of our admiration, and the theme of our praise : may we never refuse to be conformed to thee in thy sufferings and humiliation, that we may be partakers also of thy glory !

Bread is considered as the *stay* and *staff* of life. Hence, as a common term, it is put for all kinds of food. So, no doubt, it is used in that comprehensive petition of the Lord's Prayer, both in a bodily and a spiritual sense, " Give us this day our daily bread." Other terms, therefore, are employed by our Lord, in connection with this, and in allusion to the same thing, of the most general import : " My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." (John vi. 55.) In his wonderful person, in his mediatorial work and fulness, we possess the true sustenance of an immortal soul. We have in him whatever can make a guilty dying sinner alive, that he may live before God ; whatever can sustain or promote the energies and felicities of that life ; whatever can consummate it eternally, in the eternal perfection of all its powers and all its enjoyments. This is the beautiful encouraging idea conveyed to us in this allusion. These effects are attributed to his body and blood, because what he has done and suffered in that body, together with his blood-shedding upon the cross, form the ground of all our hope of pardon and salvation. In consequence of his humiliation, he pos-

sesses a glorious elevation : that crucified Redeemer who bore our nature, who suffered, died, and lay entombed, in it, is now before and upon the throne, the Source of all the blessings of salvation ; to whom we are to look for them, from whom we are to receive them, as the fruits of his own dying love, and therefore the gifts of his own gracious hand. He “ who, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him who was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared ; who, as a Son, learned obedience by the things which he suffered ; being made perfect (in his mediatorial character, through these sufferings), is thus become the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.” (Heb. v. 7—9.) “ Having entered also, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, into the holy place ” — “ into heaven itself ; ” he hath “ obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Heb. ix. 11.) This is the true spiritual meaning of the figure. In the ascended Redeemer, as the consequence of his dying love, are treasured up all the blessings of salvation, the fulness of grace and glory : and hence faith feeds on that fulness, as the *bread of life*.

There seems to be preserved, through the whole of our Lord’s discourse upon the subject, a designed allusion to the *manna* in the wilderness, with which their fathers had been fed for forty years, till they entered the land of Canaan. By using, also, a variety of appellations, he seems desirous of directing us to certain circumstances of similarity with it ; connected with others, in which the Bread of which he spake infinitely exceeds it in its nature and its effects. Was the manna rained upon them from above ? Jesus is the Bread which cometh down from heaven. (John vi. 50.) There “ he was with God, and was God ; ” existing in the glory of the Father, before he undertook, in the counsels of eternity, or entered in time upon, the work of our salvation. Jesus is eminently the Bread of God, the Gift of God ; which God has appointed and prepared, as the food of his spiritual family ; upon whom, ac-



according to the purposes, designs, and command of God, they are continually to feed. Around his church alone he falls as freely as “the dew upon the grass, which waiteth not for man, nor tarrieth for the sons of men:” just as the dew, inclosing the manna, fell around the camp of Israel, and there alone throughout the wilderness. Did it fall when they most needed it? “When we were without strength, in *due time* Christ died for the ungodly.” Did it fall when they had discovered themselves most of all unworthy, by their murmurings and repinings? So, “when we were *yet sinners*, Christ died for us.” Did it supply the whole host of Israel? So in Jesus is enough, and more than enough, for all the wants of his church and people, through all the ages of time; and through all eternity! Hence the Lord calls himself, “The true Bread;” the truth of all the shadows of the Jewish Law, whether it were the manna, or the shew-bread, or any of those provisions which the temple furnished to its devout worshippers. Those were only figures of what Jesus is, and will ever be found to be, to his people.

But the two circumstances in which he particularly excels the subject of the comparison, and which, indeed, infinitely exalts him over all comparison, is, that he is the *living Bread* (ver. 51), and the *Bread of Life* (ver. 48). Bread is a dead inanimate mass. But Jesus, as the *living Bread*, hath life in himself. “He is the Resurrection and the Life.” “In him was life,” as the ever-living Jehovah. Hence he could say, “The Bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” “He that eateth me, even he shall live by me.”—Thus he is the Bread of Life. Here is the peculiar excellency of the bread which the Gospel provides. Bread can nourish only where there are first the powers of life; but Jesus (O adorable Saviour!) gives the life which he supports,—not only nourishes, but quickens. Bread will leave those who are supported by it for a time, to sink at last in death: but whoso eateth the flesh and drinketh the blood of Jesus, by faith, “*hath eternal life*,” and he “will raise him up at

the last day.” (ver. 54.) “He that eateth this bread shall not die” (ver. 58), but “shall live for ever” (ver. 58). He shall live in his soul—live to God; and though he die in body, yet shall he live, and never die the death eternal.

Here, then, let us fix our attention, that we may learn the value of this heavenly Bread, so freely provided, so freely given, so abundantly treasured up, in the Gospel.

If a man be not spiritually alive, he feels no more of his spiritual wants, than a dead man can feel the wants of a living body. The first actings, therefore, of the Lord the Saviour upon the souls of his people, in accomplishing his designs of salvation towards them, is, when his Spirit becomes the author of a spiritual life within them, and “quickens them when dead in trespasses and sins.” (Eph. ii. 1.) The first discoveries of life are in hunger and thirst after the food which nature has provided for its nourishment. In the same manner the spiritual life begins; and, when born again of God, “the new-born babe desires the sincere milk of the word, that it may grow thereby.” (1 Pet. ii. 2.) Now he is led to see, by that Spirit of Jesus which hath quickened him, that all his life, strength, comfort, and blessings are in him, from him, and through him; so that the great proof of spiritual life is, the living by and upon him. This was the life of the Apostle, and who can live spiritually, but in the same way? “The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.” (Gal. ii. 19, 20.) And when spiritual hunger and thirst exhaust the believer, they drive his fainting soul to Jesus, from time to time, as the only Fountain of supply. The wants of an immortal spirit must be like itself, of a spiritual nature—pardon, acceptance, and peace with God; renovating and sanctifying grace; growing conformity to the image of God, with whatever is necessary to promote and perfect it; growing communion and fellowship with God; and spiritual hopes and joys arising from faith, love, and confidence in his word. Constant access, therefore, to the Throne of Grace for these, and constant supplies from thence, even grace and strength for

daily victory over sin, the world, and the devil, are necessary when the spiritual life is given, for the carrying forward, strengthening, and perfecting, this life of God in the soul. These are to be found alone in Christ, in whom alone is salvation; neither "is there any other name given amongst men whereby we must be saved."

The first earnest longing of the spiritual appetite in the renewed soul is, the earnest desire of pardoning mercy and justifying righteousness. Here, then, thou humble penitent, the Gospel opens its first views to thy admiring mind; here it opens its first rich supplies, flowing from the Redeemer's heart: the blood of Jesus is beheld here as "cleansing from all sin." Oh, how it refreshes thy soul with the assurance of thy complete forgiveness! When he communicates by his Spirit the sense of this, and enables faith to receive it as presented in the word, or at the table of his love, it feeds and nourishes the soul. Then the crucified flesh of Jesus is thy meat indeed, and his flowing blood thy drink indeed. The believing view strengthens, animates, and encourages, all the exercises of all the spiritual powers and faculties of the renewed nature, and causes a fresh spring in the spiritual growth, in holy graces, in holy delight and love. Then "he is our peace, having reconciled us to God by his cross, and slain the enmity thereby." (Eph. ii. 14—16.) Then he feeds the soul with views of pardoning and justifying grace; exhilarates with the sweet sense of mercy; enables the soul to find its delightful repast in the manifestations of Divine love; in communion and fellowship with God; and thus increases spiritual hope, and joy, and activity in the life of faith. Where else can the believer come for supplies of sanctifying grace, for strength against every enemy, for comfort and consolation, for all the blessings of a present or eternal salvation, but to this Jesus, in whom it is well pleasing to Jehovah that all fulness should dwell? These are blessings found only in Christ, communicated only by his Spirit, in their power and consolation. Here is a rich supply, the purchase of his cross



and passion, abundantly treasured up in him, who is therefore the great and sole object of the believer's faith and expectation. Here the supply is ever ready at hand, and, as it is all-sufficient in its fulness, is ever graciously given, according to promise, to the prayer of faith. The more we desire and seek, the more we shall have given to us: nor are we ever straitened in him, but in ourselves. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus," &c. (Eph. i. 3, &c.) Here, when faith is in exercise, the believer perceives, that his every want can be supplied, his every desire satisfied, as with "marrow and fatness." He who is the Author of his life, will be the Supporter and Perfecter of it. His Gospel spreads the rich provision before our eyes, when it exhibits to our view the fulness of the Redeemer; his Spirit is the Sustainer of that life, by applying it; his grace is the support and nourishment; his blessings the joy of the believing soul. Thus the believer triumphs with the Redeemer in his victory; and triumphs in the Redeemer, in confidence of victory through him. "Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is the fulness of joy; and at thy right-hand are pleasures for evermore." Hence the believer learns the practical lesson, that he as much needs to live upon Christ for the supply of his soul's wants, as he needs the supply of bread or animal food, for the sustenance of his body. And, blessed be God, here he finds an overflowing abundance, an infinite sufficiency, and is confident of an eternal supply.

When the believer feels his spirit faint and exhausted, how shall he renew his strength, and revive his decaying energies? In no other way but by feeding upon Jesus, the Bread of Life; by renewing again the believing views of his person, his work, his cross, the fulness and freeness of his grace, the prospects of his glory, and the faithfulness of the promises whereby they are all insured. Hence arises a new spring of spiritual activity, giving fresh energy to repentance, love, gratitude, hope, and obedi-

ence; fresh vigour for the Christian walk; fresh ardour for the Christian warfare. Then, *being justified* by faith, and realizing his peace with God, through Jesus Christ, he has access into a state of grace, and rejoices in hope of the glory of God, and has therefore a sure ground of rejoicing in all his dispensations. (See Rom. v. 1—5.) This is the grand truth of the Scriptures, which, the more it is realized, will bring its consolations, and purifying efficacy, into the heart. We cannot specify every want which the Christian feels; but he knows that he has found in Jesus an all-sufficiency *as yet*, throughout his Christian course: the word of truth exhibits his fulness, as suited to whatever he *may* need, that in him the believer may be *complete*. The promise of that same word secures a communication of that fulness, even *to the end*; that in him we may have eternal life; that he may become to his people the Bread of everlasting life, by feeding on which they may *live for ever*.

This, then, is the great secret of the Christian's manner of living, that he feeds on the Bread of Life, without which there can neither be spiritual health, nor any vigour in the spiritual faculties of the renewed soul. Food must be eaten, it must be received and digested, and so be incorporated, and become, as it were, one with the body which it is to nourish. This affords a just representation of the nature, exercises, and effects of that acting of the mind whereby we receive Christ into the heart, and bring his fulness of blessings into experience and enjoyment. Our Lord, therefore, still adhering to the allusion, insists, in the most striking manner, upon the necessity of *eating* this bread of life as the only means of receiving life, and without which we can have no life in us. (See John vi. 50—55.) And as the food is received into the body and becomes one with it, so, he asserts, “he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him” (ver. 56): “he is one with me, and I with him.” That act of the mind whereby he is thus received, he himself determines to be, faith, which he also considers the same as coming to

him: “ I am the Bread of Life: he that *cometh* to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” Again; “ All that the Father giveth me *shall come* to me,” &c. “ And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life,” &c. (ver. 35—40.) Faith may very properly be considered as coming to Christ, because it is the first acting of that principle in the renewed mind which, as soon as it discovers the preciousness of the Saviour, draws the heart to him in holy desire, love, and dependence. Coming to Christ in the exercise of faith is, casting my sinful perishing soul on his all-sufficiency; looking to his redeeming blood as the only cause of my pardon, his righteousness as the only ground of my justification; relying upon him alone for all which can insure my acceptance and favour with God; in the prayer of faith seeking the communication of his healing and sanctifying grace; expecting nothing but from his fulness, fully satisfied that from this we cannot expect too much.

These are the views which fill the mind of the contrite penitent. He feels what he is as a condemned transgressor of the Law, as a dying sinner; but he believes the record of God, that there is pardon and life in Jesus: he trusts in and pleads the promise, and waits for the enjoyment. Thus the acting of faith is a spiritual eating of the Bread of Life; and, being a real reception of Christ, it brings us near to him, and brings him near to us, even into our souls. By faith we taste, relish, and enjoy him, feed upon his fulness, and thereby live before God. By his grace and Spirit the powers of a spiritual life are restored in the soul, and these are quickened by continually feeding again and again upon Jesus by the actings of faith; and that faith which does not produce these effects may have acknowledged the truth concerning Christ, but has never embraced Christ himself: nor is it that living faith which is the gift of God, and bringeth salvation to the heart. The *encouragement* or *warrant* of this faith is, the free invitations of the sacred word, which direct, exhort, and command, the be-



liever to feed freely on this living food, and to enjoy the dainties of the Gospel feast. "Come, without money, and without price."... "Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." (Isa. lv. 1—3.) "Eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved." (Cant. v. 1; compare Matt. xxii. 1, &c.) What thankfulness is due from dying sinners, that such blessings are so freely given, so graciously promised! May the Lord the Spirit give us wisdom to know our need, to understand their value, that we may seek, where to seek is always to obtain!

But, however freely the blessings of the Gospel are communicated, it is not without reason that the Lord has added the injunction, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall *give* unto you." (John vi. 27.) For faith must be exercised in the use of means: thus the spiritual appetite is increased; the mind becomes more earnest in spiritual desires; and faith itself becomes more confirmed in its believing confidence in the promise: and while faith, thus established in the use of means, leads to a more diligent exercise of those means, the believing mind enjoys more of Christ in them, and his promises insure the more abundant enjoyment of his power and his blessings.

The first and grand mean is, the right use of the *Word*. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The *written* and the *preached* word here concur, and ought always to concur, in a clear discovery of the glory of Christ, his suitableness and preciousness, the richness of his mercy, the freeness of his grace, the fulness of his blessings, and the faithfulness of the covenant promise. Let the believer be found diligent in the use of these means, in reading and hearing the truth of God, and he will soon find that it presents to him the *living* and the life-giving bread. But when the reading of God's word is neglected, no wonder if the spiritual life be low and faint, unsustained by that which is the food of faith, the divinely-

appointed mean of the increase and vigour of the life of faith. Believer, prize more this sacred treasure. Let it be thy constant, thy daily employment to search the Scriptures: let no opportunity of devotion be unattended with the enlivening influence of some portion of the Divine word. It will direct thee more to Jesus; and while it inclines thee to value him more, he has promised to put an honour upon his word; and, while “magnifying his word, above all his Name,” he will be found of thee in it as the Bread of Life, the food of thy soul.

The *sacraments* of his own appointment are still further means in which, by the visible and corporeal signs, he directs the eye of faith to the spiritual and invisible provisions of his love. Here the table of his family is spread, richly furnished from the heavenly treasury. Here he calls thee, O believer, to feed to the full satisfaction of thy spiritual desires; here he brings himself down, as it were, to thy bodily senses, and bids thee enjoy the rich banquet which he has prepared, in his wounded body and flowing blood; and “which are verily and indeed taken and received by the believing in the Lord’s Supper.”

But, as food received must have time to digest and incorporate, or it will afford no nourishment; and as constantly receiving food without this, would but produce disease in the body, and consequent ill health, or death; so the continual hearing of the word, or the use of any appointed ordinances, without *meditation, serious examination, and application to our own souls*, will very little assist the recovery of spiritual health. Without these, it may even tend to increase the pride, the self-confidence, the indolence and indifference of the mind, the most dangerous and fatal of spiritual diseases; the most sure symptoms of a soul tending to spiritual and eternal death. Many professing Christians are very fond of hearing, and hearing again; hurrying from place to place, in continual anxiety to gratify an unsatisfied desire of hearing, from a variety of preachers, the truths of Christianity. They are, as some have described them, “*all ear* :” they may be said “to



live upon hearing." But, if all this be unattended with serious self-examination, it is much to be feared the motive is not such as it ought to be. But if such a course be pursued from the best of motives, it cannot be productive of the best effect: it is not the way to profit. When do such hearers enter into their closets, and pray to their Father which seeth in secret? When do they engage in serious reflections; treasure up the word in their mind; examine their state by it; and endeavour to apply it to their own heart, for conviction, consolation, or direction? No wonder if, without this, after all the apparent diligence in external ordinances, there appear but little of the spiritual life; little of the views and prospects of faith; little of the temper and conduct of their Divine Master, whose life, except in his public ministry, was a life of secret and fervent devotion; and little of the consolations of the Spirit.

*Meditation* is the act of spiritual digestion, whereby the heavenly truths are brought *into*, and into *union with*, the soul, and become the very food of life. This will, above all, lead to *fervent prayer*, which is the going out of faith, to take still more of the bread of life, to treasure it up for use. The prayerless Christian knows nothing of Divine enjoyment: he who is slack and careless in this necessary duty can have but little taste for spiritual blessings. It is to the prayer of faith that the promise is made; and when the Lord designs to give, he first gives the desiring heart, and the praying lips; and from these he never withholds himself, and the rich provisions of his grace. The Bread of Life is like our common bread, in this respect, that it is that constant food with which we can never be tired or cloyed. So must, so will, the Lord Jesus Christ be found to every believer. Behold the living Christian: he will be seeking after fresh news of Christ, after a daily application of the different parts of his fulness, for their various uses. This engages him in a constant attendance upon those means of grace in which this fulness of Jesus is set forth and usually communicated to faith. Here, and



in this way alone, he expects the vigour and comfort of his spiritual life to be maintained. He will be daily talking of this precious Saviour; hearing and reading of him; renewing his acts of faith, and fervent, but humble, love; sweetly meditating upon all his glories and all his grace: thus he feeds upon and enjoys the blessings that are in him, to the quickening of his soul in the exercise of every grace, and the strengthening of his soul with the sweetest consolations. Though recalling the same views, engaged in the same means, and receiving the same blessings, over and over again, he will be no more satiated or cloyed with these, than with eating the same bread from day to day. Here he never tires, nor will do through eternity: for, though Jesus is the same, his blessings are so infinitely glorious and various that they are always new, always the subject of new admiration and delight. Oh, what a fulness is there in that dear Redeemer who can thus eternally supply his people with increasing glory and delights. "To whom shall we go, but unto Thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Alas! how absurdly mistaken are the world at large, while forsaking the fulness of Jesus for the unsatisfying husks of earthly pleasure, the unsubstantial vanities of time. Eagerly labouring for the bread that *perishes*, but careless of that which is *living*, and *life-giving*. But, while gratifying the bodily appetite with all the delicacies of nature, how low, how sordid the pleasure, which only assimilates us to the brutes! But even if of a more refined and exalted nature, how short the time for such enjoyment! Soon the pampered body shall lie in the dust, the food of worms: "the worm shall spread under it, and the worm shall cover it." But where then shall be the immortal soul, without an interest in Christ; without partaking of that life which he alone can give? *Lost! lost in eternal death!* Then all the wisdom of this world will appear but folly—all its glories but vanity. The possessions of the earth, its silver and its gold, its pleasures and its honours, will seem but like "*feeding upon ashes.*"

All its fancied enjoyments will be but “as when an hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty,” &c. (Isa. xxix. 8.) Yea, the brightest semblance of a *self-wrought righteousness*, will be “that which is not bread.” Happy is this man, when the present sense of their insufficiency reminds him of his need of something better: when he is thus directed back to his Father’s house, where there is bread enough and to spare, while he is thus perishing with hunger: when his steps are actually led to this house of mercy, where none shall be denied access, or the rich provisions of salvation which it affords.

Have we any spiritual appetite after Jesus and his blessings? An hungry man would prefer bread above much gold, or the most invaluable precious stones; or these would only be valuable as they enabled him to obtain the present and the continual supply of the former. And what could all the world avail towards the peace and comfort of an awakened sinner? Give him all you can beside, his heart still replies, None but Christ:

None but Jesus  
Can do helpless sinners good.

Hungering and thirsting for salvation here only is the food of life. Without this spiritual appetite, indeed, the rich provision will be spread in vain:—Professing Christian, consider. Has the Lord Jesus quickened you into spiritual life? Are you living by faith upon him? What is the ground of your hope and consolation? Where are you looking for support and supplies of grace? Are you really feeding by faith, in sweet communion, on the Lord?—on all the fulness of his salvation? “Every man,” says the Saviour, “that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.” (John vi. 45, 46.) All other profession is but that lifeless faith which may encourage a vain confidence, but will never save the soul.

But, happy believer! be assured, while feeding on Jesus by faith, he will be to thee the *Bread of Life*. The enjoy-

ment of it has already quickened thee, and, living by faith upon it, thou shalt live for ever. Faith is the great mean of receiving it; and the appointed ordinances, the means of strengthening and increasing faith. Faith tastes, eats, digests, and enjoys; and thus the believer grows in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. If, with an increasing appetite after this spiritual food, we were found more diligent in the use of the means, Jesus would become more and more precious; we should feel more delight in his love, more spiritual strength in our souls, more conformity to his image in holiness, and more abundant consolations of his *Spirit*. But he who feeds upon this *Bread of God*, “*hath eternal life.*” “*I,*” says the Redeemer, “*will raise him up at the last day.*” (John vi. 40, 50, 54, and 58.) O thou eternal Saviour, we would realize thy all-sufficiency, and our absolute security! We would love thee more, and delight more in thee! Oh, may we be inclined to meditate more on thy glories, and thus feed on thy unfailing fulness! Then shall we enjoy thee more! Then shall we glorify thee on earth in faith and love, till we feed on thee in thy house above, where that food shall be without reserve or alloy, and be completely satisfied!

Glory be to thee, blessed Jesus, who, by thy sufferings, sorrows, and death, hast made thyself suitable to become our Bread of Life eternal!

Oh, Bread of heaven,  
Feed us till we want no more.



## ESSAY XI.

**Sun of Righteousness.**

THE promises of grace, like the rising day, have been gradually unfolding a clearer and a clearer light. The first promise dispelled the impenetrable darkness which sin was about to spread over fallen man: every subsequent revelation illustrated still further the designs of Sovereign Mercy, and opened to the eye of faith the plans and prospects of redeeming love. When the darkness of nature was still further increasing over a sinful world, the *types and shadows of the law* broke through the dismal gloom, and, like the rays of twilight, discovered a number of important objects, with which we were surrounded, but still, like that imperfect light, confused and indeterminate. The light of *prophecy* indicated that the day was approaching still nearer. But when Jesus appeared; when “the WORD was *made flesh*, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory,” &c. then the same *Sun* arose, which, unchangeably shining on his church, though with an increasing brightness, through time, shall with his full splendours enlighten the one day of eternal glory. Now the language of the last prophet is fulfilled; and to them that fear his name the *Sun of Righteousness* hath arisen with healing in his wings. His glories were at first, indeed, veiled in his condescension; but here is “the great mystery of godliness!” He who is Essential Glory veiled that glory in human flesh, that, through it, he might shine upon his people now, with beams of grace, and at last shine through all eternity, dispensing and scattering all around the bright beams of salvation; and, as IMMANUEL, GOD

and *Man*, in one person, be the everlasting source of all light and glory to his redeemed, in the heavenly world.

In allusion to the mediums through which his light now shines upon his people, he is called also in Scripture, “the *Morning Star*.” At present we behold not his essential glories. We see them shining as reflected from the Law and the Prophets; in all the declarations of his word; through the humility of his incarnation; or the still figurative emblems and symbols of his ordinances. In all these he is as yet discerned by faith, and not by sight; which is both the *privilege* and the *imperfection* of the present state. These discoveries of his glory, like the brightness of the morning star, were, and still are, preparatory to brighter manifestations: the light of the Law to the clearer light of the Gospel; the light of his incarnation to his appearance in glory. The Gospel itself, in its present state, we may justly apprehend, is but introductory to a full effusion of his Spirit through the earth; and the brightest glories which faith shall ever discern in this world are but leading to the full vision of his glories above.

The present allusion leads our minds up to the consideration of him, independent of the means in which he now manifests himself, or by which we now discern him; in his *essential glories*, both as GOD, and as GOD-*Man*, the *Mediator*: as having *in himself* the fulness of all blessings: as being the *Centre* and the *Source* of all excellencies out of which his church receives, and grace for grace. Blessed be his wondrous Name for ever! He hath risen in the firmament of Divine mercy to cast his beams around a benighted world; and he shall be the glory of our strength. If we now behold him, through the weakness of our natural powers, rather as the Morning Star, we shall soon behold his true glories; he will shine, till he has invested all his people with his own brightness, and “changed them into the same image from glory to glory!” May we now catch some of his bright beams to enlighten and to warm us, to quicken and to adorn us;

then will he appear more glorious, and be the subject of our admiration, love, and praise !

A few leading ideas will discover to us the propriety and beauty of this allusion, which of all others most justly represents the glory of the Redeemer in the spiritual world of grace ; his dignity, and his influences in and upon his church.

The natural *Sun* is the *centre* and the *glory* of the surrounding system, upon which it all depends ; and such is the Lord Jesus, in the system of redemption, in the spiritual and the heavenly world : he is the centre and the source of all Divine influences and blessings, claiming all our dependence, and deserving more than all our praise.

The glories of the natural *sun* are underived from any thing in creation, itself being the cause of all the glories which surround it. Every thing in creation derives its excellencies and beauties from it. In its visible splendour it incomparably exceeds all material substances ; and too bright to be seen in itself, it is “ in his light we see light.” Its influence also pervades all substances ; and when, “ as a bridegroom, he cometh out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run his race ; his going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and *there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.*” Apply these facts to the Lord Jesus, and they will be found true, with glory infinitely excelling. In his *Divine person* he is the **I AM**, the *Independent* ESSENCE, *One* in the SELF-EXISTENT JEHOVAH. In his *mediatorial* and revealed excellencies he shines as “ the Brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express Image of his person.” The glory which his human nature assumes broke through the veil of his flesh, when, on the mount of transfiguration, “ his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light” (Matt. xvii. 2) : when, again, he appeared to the beloved disciple, and “ his countenance was as the *sun* shining in its strength” (Rev. i. 16) ; and when, for the conversion of the persecuting Saul, the brightness of the mid-day



sun was eclipsed with his brighter refulgence of Divine glories. (Acts xxvi. 13.) And, like the *sun* in its *influences*, “there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” (Heb. iv. 13.) Every ray of glory, excellence, and blessedness, proceeds from him : they all centre in his fulness ; they are communicated by his power and Spirit, and enjoyed by all his people, in their measure and capacity, (which is also his gift,) when, quickened by his grace, they are made alive to spiritual things, and live in that spiritual world where he abides in the majesty of his infinite, and of his communicative, perfections. Hence He is called—“*the Sun of Righteousness.*”

Righteousness may denote benevolence and kindness ; and as such may signify the fulness, freeness, and largeness of the Redeemer’s blessings. But in this view it is rather to be referred to absolute purity, truth, and uprightness. Thus righteousness is the glory that unites all the Divine perfections, and dwells essentially in the Redeemer as *One* in the GODHEAD. Righteousness is also the glory of his mediatorial work ; and thus he declares his character : “I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” In him “mercy and *truth* meet together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” Righteousness is also the glory of his people, but not their own ; that righteousness which Jesus wrought out, which shines in the Sun of Righteousness, and, shining upon them, invests their souls with its splendours. (Isa. lxi. 10.) As the sun contains within itself, discovers by its own beams, and communicates to all around its light and heat,—so He contains essentially *in* himself, as GOD, righteousness infinite and underived ; as Mediator, he discovers and manifests an all-perfect and everlasting righteousness wrought out for his people : he imputes it to them by a sovereign act of covenant grace, and communicates it to them in the exercise of faith, by his Spirit, for their justification and salvation. Hence all their righteousness is in and

from Him, in whom they glory, as “the LORD *their Righteousness*.” The mild and gracious beams of his mediatorial glories are like the genial beams of the natural sun in their life-giving and enlightening influences; or, like the protecting wings of the *cherubim*, alluded to, perhaps, in the description of the Prophet (Mal. iv. 2), they effectually cover, they kindly refresh, they bless, they glorify, his people! Oh, may this Sun of Righteousness arise on me,—on thee,—with these healing influences in his wings!

If we consider the various effects which the sun produces throughout all nature, they will tend greatly to illustrate the infinite excellencies of the *Sun of Righteousness*, when shining in the firmament of Divine love, and elucidate the nature of those blessings which we are encouraged to expect from his mediatorial fulness. All the *light*, the heat, the life, the beauty, and the comfort of this present system are derived but from one source, the emblem of the illuminative and communicative glories of the One only Fountain of spiritual blessings\*.

LIGHT.—“And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven,” &c. “And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light (dependent upon it, and receiving its light from it,) to rule the night. He made the stars also.” (Gen. i. 14—16.) The sun is that tabernacle, or tent, which the great God has fixed for the dwelling and diffusion of (שמש) the solar light: it is that great luminary which carries, or throws, its light all abroad, and makes our day; which diffuses its light, and penetrates with its rays and influences into and through every substance, and in the light of which we behold every thing around us. What a beautiful and exact emblem of Him, in whom, as the Essential Light, is all the fulness of Godhead; in

\* See Hervey's Meditations, pp. 68—73.

whom, as Mediator, all treasures of wisdom and grace are deposited,—and for this very purpose,—for communication to his people! Rising in the Gospel, he brought the day of grace; rising in the heart, he brings the light of truth and salvation; rising in the last great day, he will bring the light of eternal glory!

When the light of prophecy was about to cease, for some hundred years, the expectation of ancient believers was directed to his approach under this beautiful character. And, behold! in the fulness of time he appears, and comes as a light into the world, that they which know him should not walk in darkness. (John viii. 12, and ix. 5.) He comes as “the light of men”—“the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;” diffusing his influences as universally in the world of grace, as the sun in the world of nature. (John i. 4, 9.)

Till Jesus rises in the heart, by the revelation of his Spirit, darkness overspreads the mind of man, like that which overshadowed the land of Egypt—“a darkness which may be felt.” The sinner can neither discover the guilt of sin, which rests upon him; the enormity of sin, which condemns him; the pollution of sin, which defiles him; the misery of sin, which surrounds him; the vanity of a world in which he is constantly perplexed and disappointed; the nature and importance of heavenly and spiritual blessings; the glory and excellency of Christ as the Saviour, opening and discovering the way of salvation; nor the true character of that God upon whom he depends in his majesty, holiness, or grace. He whose eyes are opened, when aided by the light of truth, knows and confesses that he was “once darkness,” though he is “now light in the Lord.” (Eph. v. 8; compare Acts xxvi. 18, and Eph. i. 17, 18, &c.) Light is the medium of vision. It is philosophically true, that “in light we see light”—it is the medium whereby itself is seen. And it is spiritually true, that every spiritual object is seen only in this light of life, the Lord Jesus. “In thy light” (blessed Jesus) “shall we see light.” (Psa. xxxvi. 9.)



The *person* and work of the Redeemer, as connected with the *counsels* of eternity, and the *plans* of redeeming love, can alone discover to us the true *character* and *perfections* of JEHOVAH. The glory of God shines upon man alone in the *face*, or *person*, of Jesus Christ. This is the only way in which the invisible God hath revealed himself to us, and made manifest his nature and his glories. Ignorance of God is the necessary consequence of ignorance of Jesus. His works of nature discover the tokens of his “eternal power and Godhead,” and so as to leave a sinful world without excuse: but the attributes of his Godhead—his counsels, designs, purposes, and ways to man—are seen only in Christ Jesus, by the view which faith takes of him in his person and work, in the revelation of the Gospel. There alone we learn, that in the character of God in Christ are united *mercy* and *truth*, *justice* and *grace*. There we discover all his perfections harmonizing to form the “full-orbed” glories of the Divine Majesty; perfections never separated, but constantly residing in union in the Divine nature, yea, as forming his very essence, and therefore meeting in all his acts.

Man, as a fallen creature, in a benighted world, is by nature totally *ignorant of himself*, in his origin, fall, relations, duties, state, or hopes. Hence, without the light of revelation, the very foundation of which was laid in Christ Jesus, we see him mistaking in his apprehensions of them all; and, till taught by that Spirit of Light which proceeds from Jesus, still miserably and ruinously defective in his views, even amidst the brightest external light of perfect truth. Some slight notices of sin and guilt, arising from the miseries which surround him, affect his mind with fear, but never humble his heart before God. A creature of earth, he looks no further for his happiness, and falsely fancies to obtain it while wandering from God. He is betrayed by his ignorance of things around him into a fallacious idea of his own wisdom and powers; and, by ignorance of God and his law, and of his own consequent obligations, into a delusive opinion of his own goodness.

Thus he rests without any knowledge of his need of salvation, or, if somewhat convinced of this, ignorant of the *way*. The light of grace shining into the heart, can alone enlighten and humble the sinner; and, as the shining light discovers the former darkness, can reveal to the mind its true condition.

Man, in his natural state, has been justly compared to a person shut up in a dark room amidst the most disagreeable and filthy objects, but which he does not discern, and amongst which he is therefore perfectly at ease. The smallest ray of light let into the apartment begins to discover to him the things with which he is surrounded; and though this discovery be very imperfect, it tends to alarm him, and to render him dissatisfied with his situation. The more the light breaks in, the more it tends to interrupt his peace, to give him an abhorrence of his situation, and render him anxious to remove the filthy objects, to cleanse his miserable abode, or, if possible, to escape from it. Such are the effects of the light of grace shining from Jesus upon the heart. It discovers *man to himself*, the secret dispositions and workings of his heart, the condition in which he is placed, and the state in which he stands before a holy God as a guilty, polluted, and helpless sinner, till, humbled in himself, and deeply abased, he longs for that deliverance which the Gospel offers, and which grace brings to the heart. And this will account for the fact, why those who are most under the influence and power of Divine grace, have the deepest sense of their sin in its deformity and guilt; and why, like the Apostle, the *greatest saints* are most ready to confess themselves—"the chief of sinners."

The *world* miserably deceives its votaries by its fascinating glare: all its objects are seen through the false medium of corrupt and carnal passions: never are they beheld aright, till the light of truth, shining from Jesus in the Gospel, discovers the glories of an eternal world, and enables the believing mind to compare aright present with invisible things, temporal with eternal. This Divine light,



shining into the heart by the Spirit, gives “a right understanding in all things.” (See 1 John v. 20.) Those things which before, and otherwise, appeared of great importance, now wear a very different aspect: all the glories of earth sink into vanity before the glories of the Gospel salvation; as the faint taper dies away, or the most brilliant star is eclipsed and unseen, when the “*sun* shineth in its strength.” This Divine light “teacheth all things, and is truth, and is no lie.” As far as we are enlightened by its rays, it excludes the entrance of error, which arises only from the remains of our natural darkness and prejudices. Now all things are seen in their true nature, their relative importance and excellency (1 Cor. ii. 12); and the heart being enlarged into believing views of the glories of an eternal world, the believer cheerfully declares himself but a stranger and a pilgrim in this, satisfied not to have his rest or his abiding-city here, but seeking “that rest which remaineth for the people of God” above, and waiting for his enjoyment and happiness in that “city which hath foundations, whose Maker and Builder is God.” Thus the *light* shining from the *Sun of Righteousness* not only discovers the darkness in which sin and guilt have involved our fallen nature, but shews the path which leads to life and glory, shines upon and illuminates with bright and glorious beams the heavenly way, and opens to the view of faith the objects and blessings of the spiritual world in which it shall terminate, and of which the mind of man was before totally ignorant.

And as the *sun* is the discoverer of its own glories, in its own light, as well as of the beauties of nature all around; as it is the only medium by which we see itself, and perceive its splendour,—so it is by the light proceeding from the *Sun of Righteousness* that we alone discern his glories; that we learn how wonderful the Lord Jesus Christ is in himself, as the Fountain of all excellencies and blessings; how entirely dependent we are upon the communications of his fulness; how infinitely and eternally satisfactory the benefits derived from him; and that he thus becomes pre-



cious, exceedingly precious, precious above all beside, to the enlightened and believing mind !

**HEAT.**—The sun is the source of *heat* and *warmth* : “ There is *nothing hid* from the *heat* thereof.” The spiritual warmth of a soul is, *holy love*, of which Jesus is the fountain and the fulness, the pattern, the motive, and the effective cause. As we have no knowledge of God but in Christ, so there can be no love to God but as a God in Christ. The more his character is viewed by faith, as manifested in Jesus, the more will the heart and affections be engaged and devoted to him. How sweetly powerful and graciously effective are the beams of Divine light, when, shining on the perfections, characters, and ways of God, they discover him in all the designs of his everlasting love, the purposes of his grace, the counsels of his mercy, the works of redeeming love, and the rich and suitable preparations of his covenant blessings to his people ! By these views, the Holy Ghost shedding abroad the love of God in the heart, diffuses a Divine influence through all its powers, warming and enlivening the affections into an holy fervour of spiritual delight, and invigorating the soul with the *vital heat* of Divine love.

Without believing views of Christ, without the knowledge of his person, work, and offices, applied and coming home to the heart by the Spirit, the heart of man is cold as the wintry ice towards God and all the blessings of a spiritual world, though warm enough in the love and pursuit of earthly vanities. Without repeated views of Jesus by faith, the heart of the believer soon becomes cold and lukewarm ; so that the life of the believer is, “ living by the faith of the Son of God.” And what can so animate the heart, as to be enabled to add, “ Who loved me, and gave himself for me ?” Jesus is the source and the pattern of all love. His love was, in its *origin*, *self-derived*, without any cause but in himself—“ because he loved us :” in its *degree*, it is *beyond all measure* that the human mind can apply to it,—“ He so *loved* the church,” &c. It may well, therefore, be the pattern of our love to him and to

each other, though we can never equal its infinite degree ; and when his beams lighten on our souls with their genial influence, it becomes both the motive and effective cause of ours, and “ we love him, because he first loved us.” Shine, blessed Jesus, upon us, and thy love shall kindle ours !

His *ordinances* are his own established means of communicating his influences. In them he shines, and melts the icy affections into the flowings of love : the hardened heart becomes like wax, prepared and softened by his beams for the impressions of his grace ; and the lukewarm soul glows afresh, while he illuminates his truth by his own secret influences, and conveys it into the conscience and the heart. Then when he brings before the eye of the mind the renovated views of his person and glories, in all their fulness, suitableness, and everlasting sufficiency, the heart experiences a reviving change. We come *dull*, but go away *cheerful* : we come fearing and trembling, but go away rejoicing : we come lifeless and inactive, but return with affections constrained by the manifested love of Jesus. Let these views ever engage our attention and desires, when we come into the house of the Lord, or are employed in his sacred ordinances. In these let it be our great object to see Jesus, to discern his glories, that we may be influenced by his love.

It is from hence that we see so much cold and inanimate religion in the world, because it has no connection with the Lord Jesus. He is the Source of all light and vital warmth. That religion which is not derived from him, which has not respect to him, which is not supported by faith in him, and communication from him, is not the work of his own Spirit, and partakes not of his Divine nature ; it has but the influence of a moon-light profession, and is but a shadow which soon passeth away. True religion in the heart, arises from a vital union with Christ, is a practical receiving out of his fulness ; and thus the Christian feels, and discovers all around, the transforming efficacy of his beams : it is the love of Christ manifested to the

soul, producing love to Christ, and thus rendering the believer fruitful in every good word and work. Standing at the cross, that wonderful scene of love, the believer receives by faith the beams of pardoning mercy, and the soul kindles into holy affections, increasing with the growing discoveries of his boundless grace. Is this our religion? If not—if our profession neither warms our own hearts, nor spreads its influence and its benefits around us—is it any wonder that there should be no power, nor joy, nor consolation in it? The religion of Jesus is of a very different nature: it is not only the brightness of light, but the warmth of love. May this religion be ours!

LIFE and FRUITFULNESS.—“In him was *life*; and the life was the light of men.” (John i. 4.) All natural life, both animal and vegetable, depends upon the *sun’s* influence, though this is most apparent in the vegetable world. When his rays are withdrawn or diminished in their power, the vegetable tribes die away, and nature appears a barren desert. When returning to warm the earth, his beams begin to shoot forth again with renovated strength, his powerful influences are immediately felt, and all nature revives again into life and vigour. Hence we read of “the precious fruits brought forth by the sun.” (Deut. xxxiii. 13.) But the natural sun cannot *give* life. He finds those *powers of life* which he excites and quickens into activity. The sun is but a vehicle of that life, which the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Lord of nature, gives in the natural world, through the established order of creation. But Jesus is himself *the Life*, the *Origin*, and *Source* of all in the spiritual creation and world of his church. His Divine power *gives* life to those who were before “dead in trespasses and sins.” He first sovereignly removes the sentence of death, whereby the condemned sinner passes from death unto life; out of a *state of death* to a *state of life* before God; and then says to the dead sinner, *Live*. The dead hear his voice, and they that hear do live. (John v. 25.) He alone quickens the powers of life which he has implanted; his grace brings them forth



into action, and preserves them from decay, according to the order of the covenant of grace : "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." God hath laid up all the supplies of nourishment for the spiritual life in Christ Jesus, to be received as we need them, out of his fulness ; and as faith receives them from him, so alone can we grow in repentance, love, hope, joy, and every Christian grace. Upon him we are equally dependent, as the earth is upon the solar influences. Whatever may be the soil, whatever the care employed in its cultivation, without the sun all would be in vain \* ; there would be neither life nor fruitfulness.

This absolute dependence does not, however, preclude, in earthly things, the necessity of means or labour : nor must it do so in spiritual things ; though, as the labours of the husbandman without the influence of the heavens would be vain and ineffectual, so would all means of grace, without the gracious influences of Jesus and his Spirit in them. Life, in either case, is not communicated, or, it remains torpid and unfruitful.

How powerfully and effectually does the returning sun, in the season of spring, repair the ruins of the wintry cold ! His influence gently and kindly draws up the sap, thrusts out the buds, opens the leaves and blossoms, expands the flowers, forms the fruit, paints it with the beauty of its colours, and calls forth the juices which mellow it into its agreeable flavours, and matures it into perfection. All nature is at once alive. The change is beautiful and exhilarating to the observer ; from the desert to the fruitful field, from the dying stems to the innumerable flowers of varied orders and beauty, spreading their colours, and diffusing their odours all around, in the gay and well-arranged garden. The wilderness and the solitary place are glad ; the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose ; the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted for a forest. (Isa. xxxv. 1, 2 ; and xxxii. 15, 16. Compare

\* See this represented under another allusion, equally interesting, in Eph. iv. 15, 16 ; Col. ii. 19.

Hosea ii. 21—23.) These are the changes of nature by the influence of the solar rays, and they are frequently taken in Scripture as emblems of those changes in grace which attend the powerful word and influences of the *Lord our Sun of Righteousness*. Then, under the power of such illuminations, the barren heart, where nothing appeared but death, springs up into spiritual life, and manifests by the graces of his Spirit, that it is become alive to God. But, when he has implanted his life and grace, it is his influence alone that can make it thrive. As the sun's rays draw up the vegetable juices of the plant where the principle of life is in vigour, and carry them through its different pores and ramifications, till the whole grow up to maturity, so is it the fresh communication of his grace which alone draws up the soul, gives thoughts of heavenly things, and directs the aspiring mind upwards to himself. Without his influence descending, we can never ascend towards God and heaven; and, the more these influences are felt, the more alive is the heart to God, the more lively its tendencies to fruitfulness and duties, till it ripen by his full rays in glory. Oh, let us ever dwell near to him in faith and prayer! Thus shall we dwell more in his rays; we shall derive the virtue of his gracious beams; and by Christ Jesus, “we shall grow up into Christ Jesus in all things.”

BEAUTY.—All nature shines in the sun's beams. If the sun were blotted from the heavens, what would the whole world be, but a dead mass, without life, without order, without comeliness or beauty? While his rays produce the life of nature, in the light of those rays are seen the various colours which adorn the surface of all created things. A just representation of the shining of the Sun of Righteousness upon his people, when he invests them with those rays of communicative righteousness, in which they shine gloriously in the sight of God. When God looks upon the world out of Christ, it appears (as it really is) in a state of sin, darkness, and death. All is darkness without him. But, as the *Sun of Righteousness*, he shines

out, and dispenses abroad his beams; and, as all the glories of heavenly light and splendour are in him, by an act of his own sovereign love and power, the grace, the merit, the benefit, the influences of his mediatorial glories are transferred to his people. He is **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**. This is the name whereby he is to be called in his church. (Jer. xxiii. 6.) And “surely,” says another Prophet, “shall one” (every one of his believing people) “say, In the Lord *have* I righteousness,” &c. This is the peculiar glory of the Mediator, what he is *to* us, and what he *makes* us. He clothes the believer with the glory of his beams. His righteousness is the bright shining robe of light, which arrays his church, in which they stand “justified from all things.” When God, therefore, looks upon the world of his people, as “*in Christ*” they shine in his light, they are adorned with his brightness; they are comely in his comeliness; pure in his purity; righteous in his righteousness; yea, the “righteousness of God *in Him*.” When light shines with great force of illumination upon any object, it so irradiates the substance upon which it shines, as to prevent the discovery of many spots or blemishes, which might otherwise be found in it; yea, in some cases, to purify and purge them away. Thus a soul in Christ is complete in him before God; its spots of sin and guilt are covered, yea cleansed away. “The Lord will not behold iniquity in Jacob, nor see perverseness in Israel.” This is our righteousness, to be covered with his righteousness: this is our glory, to be invested with, and shining in, his glory. All that the believer has is in him, and from him, secured by union with him, derived continually from his boundless stores. “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, (says the church in every generation, as of old,) my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness:” these are the garments of glory and beauty, in which the believer appears before the Most Holy One and Pure, as a bridegroom decked with ornaments, and a bride adorned



with her jewels. (Isa. lxi. 10.) Thus shall his glories shine more and more upon his church, till they are all presented, “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,” before the throne: till they themselves “shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father.”

And as he makes them righteous in his righteousness, so, when shining into their hearts, by the sanctifying influences of his Spirit, he transforms them into his image. “Beholding the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.” As the natural sun infuses his glory into the gold and precious stones, even in the bowels of the earth, so does He infuse his grace and beauty into all his saints, who are his stones of beauty and glory; and, therefore, his peculiar treasure\*, his jewels. They are, therefore, made to love righteousness, and to practise righteousness. They imitate all his virtues, and learn of him the duties of piety towards God; of benevolence and justice towards man. But he is the Fountain, the Source, the Giver of the grace; their light is reflected by them, from him, and to his glory. Hence the exhortation, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” Under his influences received by faith, they are enlightened and enlivened, and derive all from the One Sun of Righteousness; and they shall shine at last, as his *sanctified ones*, before the throne, when they “obtain the inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ Jesus.”

COMFORT AND JOY.—The world would not be more comfortless without the sun, than the believer without Christ: his presence brings and preserves the joy of the soul; and all joy which does not spring from him, in the breast of a sinner, must be false and delusive. This Sun of Righteousness has “*healing in his wings*.” The view of his atoning blood and everlasting righteousness; of his prevalent intercession and all-sufficiency of grace; of his mediatorial government; of the love, the grace, the good-

\* See Hervey's Meditations, p. 71.

ness of his heart; the fulness and faithfulness of his promises; the recollection that he is *my* Saviour, and upon the throne for me,—these are considerations that must for ever be as healing as Gilead's balm, to the wounded conscience of the penitent sinner, and refreshing as the most salutary cordial to the mind of the afflicted believer. These views will justify the exhortation, otherwise so unsuitable to such a world as this, “Rejoice in the Lord *always*,” &c. Our Redeemer says, “Let not your heart be troubled;” and assigns the sufficient reason, in the consideration of his own mediatorial government—“Believe in me.” The peculiar office, therefore, of that Spirit which he is exalted to give, is, to be the active *Comforter* of his people, as all their *consolation* is in himself. This he effects, by preparing their hearts through his *regenerating grace* for the reception of his consolations; opening the heart to receive them, and then testifying of Jesus, and glorifying Jesus, as the all-sufficient Saviour and Fountain of all blessings to his people. As the *Spirit of Adoption*, he seals them for himself, forms them into the *character*, and insures to them the *privileges*, of children, and then becomes “the earnest of the inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of his glory.” (See John xvi. 7—11; Eph. i. 14; Rom. viii. 14—17.) They lament the withdrawal of the Saviour's beams of light, as the greatest of all the evils which can befall them. The light of the sun withdrawn from the vegetable creation, would not produce a more sensible decay of life and vigour, than the absence of his Beloved from the believing soul. Then gloom hangs over the prospect, and the fears of guilt distress the soul. He expresses his sorrow by melancholy reflections on the past, and earnest longings after the speedy restoration of his gracious influences. “O that it were with me as in months past!” &c. “Why art thou so long absent, O my God?” &c. “Why hidest thou thy face, and forgettest my misery and trouble?” “Return, O Lord! how long!” To walk in his light, by faith, is the joy and triumph of

the believing soul. To have the discoveries of pardoning mercy, of a reconciled God, of justifying grace, the fullness of spiritual blessings, and of his direction in all our concerns, render *all things* full of light, the light of wisdom and of goodness, and therefore of peace and joy.

The remains of a carnal and of an earthly mind, the power of unbelief, or the weakness of genuine faith, often interrupt the actual and sensible experience of this, and, like the darkening and overshadowing cloud, intercept the bright beams of his consolations. But Jesus, as the *Sun*, still remains the same; and his beams, which are pure light and joy in themselves, often dissipate and break through the clouds. These are the only source of the believer's joy on earth; and it is his security that they are not essentially affected by any of the present changes, but, fixed above the clouds of sense, they remain the same. They shall shine upon him, breaking through the darkest scenes below, in life and in death, all-sufficient for his support and final triumph; and then shine forth in the full rays of pure and unmixed lustre and glory from the throne above. Here is a changing scene, through the varying nature of all our present enjoyments; but God, and Christ, his Spirit, his covenant, his grace, his promises, are unchangeable; and beyond this mutable world is immutability of glory!

These views of Jesus must tend to exalt his glories. As the sun is the greatest blessing on earth, so is the Lord Jesus the greatest glory of the spiritual and heavenly world. He is eminently "the gift of God;" an "unspeakable gift" in such a world as this—satisfactory in itself, eternal in its duration! How are men deceiving and deceived while anxiously inquiring, "Who will shew us any good?"—and neglecting the Fountain of all good! Without Christ the world with all its glories would be "but an Egypt of darkness, a wilderness of barrenness, an hospital of diseases." Without Christ, a sinner is under the curse of the Law, in the darkness of ignorance, and descending to the darkness of everlasting death. It is



Jesus who hath "brought life and immortality to light:" it is He who brings it into the heart by his Spirit, in the beams of pardoning saving mercy; and it is He who is the light, life, and glory of the world above.

Oh, what glories shine in the Redeemer's person! what needful blessings in his rays! He is the "All in all" in grace, as the sun is in nature. We have all in him: we can want nothing, if we have him; we can have nothing valuable without him, in time or eternity. Take away Christ from the Gospel, and you take from it all that is excellent in it. Take away Christ from the heavenly world, and you deprive it of all that is glorious. Take away Christ from the heart of a believer, and you take away all his treasure and all his consolation: yea, "in all things he hath the pre-eminence." He is the *Morning Star*, he is the *Sun of Righteousness*. We admire his glories as GOD; as GOD-MAN; Mediator, and Redeemer; shining in all the beams of grace now, and of glory through eternity. He is beyond compare, and beyond all blessing and praise. Let us not neglect the light of his grace lest we lose the light of his glory (John i. 5, 10-13), lest we fall into the condemnation of those who, when light is come into the world, love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. (John iii. 19.)

Believer, realize your happiness and security in "the *Lord your righteousness*." Yes, you need him in all his fulness: without him you have neither righteousness nor strength; but in him, and in the promises of his grace, you may securely trust for all. If in any measure you erroneously conceive that you can do without his supply, you will soon, by walking in darkness, be convinced of your mistake.

Come, then, my soul, let me trust in him for pardon, grace, and glory. Come, let me in meditation approach into his light, that I may warm myself with his rays. Let me encircle myself in his righteousness. Let me seek to derive life, fruitfulness, and consolation from him, and adorn myself with him, that he may be my beauty and my

glory, in which I may appear glorious before God. Let me, then, look for the light of his Spirit, that in his grace I may shine before men. Let this be my daily employ here ; and, realizing his glorious character by faith, I shall enjoy peace in every possible situation on earth, and a joyful hope beyond ; while, sanctified by his Spirit, I am transformed more and more into his glories. Soon I hope to shine with all his glories upon me, and be completely like him when surrounded with his unveiled uninterrupted beams of light from his throne above.

Then, O believer, “ the sun (of this earthly system) shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee ; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.” Then “ *thy* SUN shall no more go down, neither shall *thy* Moon withdraw itself ; for the *Lord* (JEHOVAH) shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.” (Isa. lx. 19, 20.)

## ESSAY XII.

**Desire of all Nations.**

How can He be otherwise, in whom, though of the Jewish nation, and the "Seed of Abraham," "all the nations of the earth were to be blessed?" (Gen. xxii. 18.) As this circumstance should ultimately put the greatest honour upon the people of the Jews, their expected Messiah is spoken of under this character, at a season when their situation was most afflictive, and their faith needed the greatest supports. When observing the inferiority of the second temple, in comparison with that of Solomon, many of the elders of the people wept with a loud voice. (See Ezra iii. 11—13.) This, in their view, indicated too plainly the degraded state into which the nation had sunk, during their long captivity; yet the grand promise of God to them, which yet remained to be fulfilled, secured their future glory. To this, therefore, the Prophet directs their faith, to wipe away the tears of the sorrowful, and confirm the joy of the triumphant. (Hagg. ii. 3—7.) He informs them that their God could adorn his temple with all the glories of earth at his pleasure: "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts." (ver. 8.) But he had reserved for this temple a much higher honour, an honour of a different kind, but infinitely excelling. "The glory of the latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give *peace*\*, saith the Lord of hosts." (ver. 9.) The second temple is now destroyed: the prophecy, therefore, whatever it may

\* שלום perhaps for שלרה, alluding to the name *Shiloh*, or the ש as the affix, for—their *Shiloh*.



include, must be accomplished; but, if we consider the whole passage (ver. 6—9), in no sense can it be verified but in the appearance of their MESSIAH in it; and in no person could this have had its accomplishment but in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. For him, and near the time of his approach, the Lord prepared the way: he shook the heavens of the Jewish heavenly or ecclesiastical polity; he shook the earth, the sea, and the dry land of its civil government; and he shook all nations by the conquering arms of the Romans, till the great “Blessor of all nations” appeared, and, as the “WORD *made flesh*,” as “IMMANUEL, GOD *with us*,” adorned this second temple with his presence, and filled it with his superior glory, a glory infinitely transcending all the lustre of earthly magnificence. He alone, then, is, or ought to be, the “*Desire of all nations* :” he is “*the Peace*,” the promised *Shiloh*.—Spirit of our dear Redeemer, so exhibit him spiritually to the eye of faith, that he may be the Desire of our hearts, convinced that he is “all our Salvation,” and therefore worthy to be “all our Desire.”

When we consider how many there are who are totally ignorant of the very person of Jesus; how many, under the light of the Gospel, are altogether ignorant of his excellencies; how many ungratefully despise and reject his glories and his grace; and that a still greater number are unconcerned, and careless of all things relating to him; it seems difficult to conceive how the appellation can be true. It seems rather to mark out what he is worthy to be, than what he is; to apply rather indirectly to his suitableness, than expressly to the fact; virtually to his excellencies, than actually to the regard which he has obtained.

Instantly upon the first promise he became the chief Desire of the infant world. His appearance seems to have been immediately expected by them (see Gen. iv. 1), and they anxiously waited for the event, till, perhaps, delay abated their ardour, and corruption and idolatry diverted their attention to objects more congenial to a depraved and sinful race. A chosen line, who seemed to have

been specially preserved in the first generations, from among the family of Seth, with, perhaps, a few individuals besides, were alone looking for him, who was alone the worthy object of desire to all. At length general depravity called down general judgment; and the waters of the flood overwhelmed the whole, leaving only the righteous Noah to survive its destructions. The same depravity soon spread itself again, notwithstanding this awful warning, in the different families of this highly favoured patriarch; till, to prevent the entire degeneracy of mankind, God called Abraham as his witness before the nations, and his seed as his chosen servants, to be the depositaries and testifiers of his laws, and ultimately the means of the Messiah's birth according to the flesh. His descendants, therefore, from that time were continually looking anxiously for the promised Messiah, and were waiting to welcome him, as the great glory and honour of their nation. Their great progenitor rejoiced, through the medium of type, and vision, and prophecy, to see his day: he saw it by faith, and exulted. Patriarchs, prophets, kings, and righteous men, through the same medium, though with increasing clearness, continued to look for him with holy desire and love; and, whether they understood or not his character and design, he was really and personally the great, the primary, object of desire to every individual of that chosen people. The language of prophecy, about the time of his appearance, had excited a general expectation of the event, and devout believers were ready to welcome "*the Lord's Christ*" (Luke ii. 25, 26), and "looking for redemption in Jerusalem." (ver. 38.) But though the direct language of prophecy, and therefore the more direct expectation of the Messiah, was confined, in later times, to the Jewish nation, yet he might, in a more restricted sense, be considered literally as the "Desire of all nations;" because, for a long time, some, if not many, in all nations, were looking for his approach.

Till the earth had corrupted its ways before God, the general expectation was directed to him, as the great

Teacher and Blessor of mankind; and many pious men, such as holy Job and his friends, retained the knowledge and hope of the Redeemer. (Job. xix. 23—27) The remembrance of the first promise, the vestiges of ancient tradition, the prophecy of Balaam, or other early prophecies, still retained, though greatly corrupted in the Gentile world, preserved the expectation of some great person to be born, as the great friend of the human race. From some one or other of these sources was, perhaps, derived the knowledge of the ancient Magi. And could we, at this distance of time, unravel the intricacies of antiquity, and obtain clear information and the right clue to the mythological stories of the idolatrous Gentiles, they would be found to have had their origin from some diverging rays of revelation, mixed with the darkness of human ignorance and depravity: or, from some original prophecies of the Saviour, debased more and more, as they descended from one generation to another, by the fictions of the human imagination, to suite the carnal views and the corrupt taste of mankind. It must, indeed, be acknowledged, that, in the midst of heathen darkness, some brighter intellects plainly discerned the necessity of such a Teacher, and, therefore, ventured to foretel the appearance of such a person as a Teacher to be sent from heaven. That this idea originated in the natural reasonings of their own mind, is to me very doubtful: it most probably arose from some of the aforementioned causes, though not to be traced at the time; if not from some higher influence\*. Thus the attention of many in the heathen world was excited to this grand event, who might be said, though with very confused ideas, to “desire” the Saviour. These circumstances, however, had no beneficial influence on the generality of mankind; and appear insufficient to justify the application of this character to the Redeemer; for few in any nation had any real desire of his person or his coming, and, amongst the Jews, that which chiefly sti-

\* Witness the Sibylline Oracles, Socrates, &c.



culated their desire, was a very false idea of his real character and design. We cannot, therefore, consider the term as referring literally to the *act of desire*, but as rather figuratively denoting *the suitableness of the Saviour to be desired by all*. Thus, the earth, when parched, is said to “desire the rain:” thus, those are said *to choose misery* who delight in the ways of sin, because they naturally lead to it: thus, we are figuratively said *to desire whatever is suited to the relief of our necessities and miseries*, or the furtherance of *our happiness*, though we may have no specific idea of the particular thing itself which is requisite or suitable, nor of any thing but our want. Such is Christ, even to the ignorant and impenitent; while to his people, who know him, he is the “altogether lovely.” A few observations will illustrate the truth of these ideas.

First, then, we may observe, that such is the present state of the world, that *men perceive a need of something*, which, if they really knew the situation in which they are placed, they would find *to be—the Lord Jesus*. Man feels his wants: he is,—he must be,—a needy, because he is a dependent, creature. But when he looks around him, though at first elated with hope, and big with expectations, he finds nothing here suited to his whole nature. Wherever he fixes his confidence, he is soon convinced it is not what he expected it to be. All that offers itself for his enjoyment soon discovers its vanity and emptiness, and fails to afford him the satisfaction he looked for in it. Still there is a *something* which he needs. And, when he has run all the circle of earthly pleasures, or attained all that earth can give, there is yet *that something wanting*. The general experience of mankind concurs with that of the royal Preacher, who, in possession of more than any one ever attained beside of wisdom or prosperity, pronounced the sum of all, “*Vanity and vexation of spirit.*”

Hence, while feeling the vacuity which remains, even when in possession of all the good which earth can yield; man must *actually desire, and long for, something be-*

yond, which can only be found in Christ. The grand pursuit of man is, happiness. In whatever way he wanders, whatever are his pursuits or occupations, however mistaken in the means, this is his object and his end. But does he acquire it? Alas! what frequent, what continual disappointment! To obtain this he must have objects to enjoy, in which all his wishes can meet, all his powers can be exercised, all his desires can centre, and all his passions (such, indeed, as he received them from the hand of his Creator, and not as distorted by sin) can find complete satisfaction. But these are not to be found on earth. To obtain any one of those important ends, how many schemes does he devise! how many plans does he execute! He turns from one pursuit to another, changes again, and shifts the scene, and still finds himself no nearer the great object of *man's desire*. Hence arises the restlessness of human nature. Dissatisfied with his present situation and the present state of things, man is anxious for something new; waiting continually for some change that may, as he supposes, render his situation better, promote his happiness, or supply that emptiness in his soul which all his present possessions have still left behind. But, while he feels the insufficiency of earth, his depravity blinds him to his true state and his real interest. He knows not, and is unwilling to know, where the fault lies: he is pleased with the chain of his passions which binds him to earth, and, filled with illusive dreams of happiness, which ever flies from him as he attempts to embrace it, he hopes to remedy his misery by rushing further into that which is the real cause of it. He has a secret conviction that he is not *where*, and *what*, he ought to be; and that every thing around him is not *that to him* for which it was designed: but, alas! he knows not that all this arises from his distance from God; that it is the necessary consequence of his being found a sinner against his Creator; that sin has fixed a dissatisfaction in all earthly enjoyments, embittered them with guilty fear, and clouded them with gloomy suspicions; that it has stamped an emptiness on

all earthly glory; and that man, having wandered from the true source of perfection and bliss, only rests on other things to be disappointed. Hence, the uncertainty of earth, even in its best estate. Man must have an higher good, or be eternally miserable. He must be restored to the Divine favour, and rest again in the love and enjoyment of his God, or for ever wander amidst hopeless vanities. But for these things where shall he look? Oh, behold, thou who art guilty and miserable, thy help, thy refuge! It is placed in Jesus the Friend of sinners! He is the Tree which can sweeten the bitter waters of life (see Exod. xv. 23—26), and render them pleasant and salutary. He is the refuge where all the desires of men may safely rest, nor fear insufficiency or disappointment. For,

I. *There is in him what is really and truly desirable for all nations.*—The cause of all the misery and emptiness of earth is, that separation which sin has produced between God and his creatures: this nothing can remove, but that which first removes our sin, and thus opens again the way to God. Hence, Christ is the foundation of all our joys, and must be the worthy object of *desire*; because, having taken away sin by the sacrifice of himself, he has become “the way, the truth, and the life.” He interposes himself between sinners and the arm of Divine justice, and becomes the mean of communication between God and his creatures, in which we again draw near to God, and in which the manifestations of his love and favour are again made to his beloved people. Hence, to know Christ, to be found in Christ, to be a partaker of Christ, is to a guilty sinner the all he needs. In him our fears and dangers are all prevented, our wants are all relieved, and all our desires abundantly supplied, and rest in assured hope of complete and eternal satisfaction.

(1.) *Whatever a sinner fears, or has reason to fear, is averted by the work of his cross, and the grace of his heart.*—While the conscience is oppressed, while the mind labours under the apprehension of being lost, eternally lost,



through sin, all the gratifications of sense, or the glories of the world, can afford no satisfaction. Yet all the fears of a sinner on this point are just, independent of the grace of the Gospel: for a sinner under the Law, is under the curse. Every transgression and disobedience is threatened with the just recompense of reward, and the sentence pronounces every one accursed “who continues not in all things written in the book of the Law to do them.” The attention may be diverted from these awful declarations by the scenes of earthly dissipation, by the pursuits of pleasure, while carried round in the whirling vortex of sensual delights, or occupied in the various engagements of a busy life; but the fact remains the same. The *remedy* is alone found in Christ, for “there is salvation in no other,” &c. It is the “faithful saying” of the word of truth, and “worthy of all acceptation,” that He “came into the world to save sinners.” Whatever was necessary to do or suffer in this wonderful undertaking he accomplished, finished—completely finished. He bare our sins in his own body on the tree, till he bare them all away. He purchased our blessings at the inestimable price of his own blood, and conquered our enemies by the power of his arm. In human nature he obeyed and suffered; in human nature he ransomed and acquired; in human nature he triumphed and arose, and holds all blessings in his hands upon the throne of glory! There he now invites the weary and heavy-laden to himself, with the promise of his rest; and, in the union of his Divine and human nature, appears as able as he is gracious to effect to the uttermost the salvation of all who place their souls in his hands to save. When thus, by the application of his blood and righteousness, he stills the fears of the penitent, when he calms the tumult which the conviction of guilt and danger had excited in the heart, then he appears to the believing mind in all the glory of his character and offices, and claims to be, as he deserves to be, the only desire of the believer “*rejoicing in Christ Jesus.*”

And now, to render him suitable to such sinful needy creatures, (2.) *Whatever is good, whatever is necessary,*

*whatever can be profitable to them, is treasured up in him.*

—In him is the source of wisdom and of knowledge, the riches of grace and mercy, all fulness, all the fulness of Godhead, that he may supply *every good thing* to his believing and obedient people. Hence all the comprehensive promises of the Gospel, which meet every want of the believing mind, and insure the ample supply; till pardon, acceptance, grace, strength, and victory, issue in everlasting triumph.

In a word, (3.) *All things which can be the objects of spiritual desire, in the fullest extent of our immortal powers, are in him.*—By him they were *obtained*, in him they are *deposited*, and from the hand of the glorified Redeemer they are *graciously bestowed*. The usual objects of desire among mankind are, *health and peace, riches, pleasures, honour, and glory*,—objects worthy of pursuit, when real and substantial. The great error of mankind arises from having mistaken the shadow for the substance, the appearance for the reality. Hence the blessings of the Redeemer are, in general, contrary to the views which men entertain of blessedness, because they are blinded by ignorance and corruption, though they will ultimately be found the only substance of real good. It is he who healeth the diseases of the mind, and thus restoreth *health and peace*. He also can make thee, O impoverished sinner, *rich* indeed! rich in faith, rich in grace, rich towards God, till the riches of eternal glory more than satisfy thy soul. What *pleasures* can ever equal the sweet enjoyments which spring from the sense of pardoning mercy, a reconciled God, adoption into his family, the confidence of his fatherly care, and the communication of all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus! But where he is in the heart, these are his sure attendants. They who know him as their portion are not, indeed, exempt from the troubles of life, and oftentimes have a larger share of them than others; but what are these, if Christ be near, if dwelling in their hearts by faith, if manifesting the sweet and cheering influence of his unchangeable love? While rejoicing in sin forgiven,

the sting is removed from all their afflictions and sorrows : they can rejoice in tribulation, while it worketh patience, experience, and hope : they can triumph in that which others most dread, and call even *death* their friend, their best friend ; for, when he dismisses them from all their earthly connections, he dismisses them also from all their sins, cares, and sorrows, and leads them to the full enjoyment of their inheritance above. In the present state, their Lord and Saviour exalts his chosen saints from being “strangers and foreigners,” to become the children of their Heavenly Father ; places them in the family and household of faith ; gives them the privilege and honour of being called the sons of God. What honour can equal this ? And yet “it doth not appear what they shall be.” Their character and privileges are not here properly understood, nor clearly revealed. When he appears again in his glory, “they shall be like him.” A glory awaits them which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,” &c. “Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ,” their inheritance is “an *eternal weight of glory*.” Now their title is irrevocably sure, the free gift and grant of grace, ratified by the blood of the covenant, signed and sealed to them in the promises of the Gospel, and the Christian Sacraments. Their *new birth* in Christ Jesus by the Spirit proves their interest in these privileges : faith now apprehends and enjoys the earnest ; and soon he who has adopted, called, and sanctified, them, will put them into possession, “in his presence, where there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore !”—O what a friend is Jesus ! *suited, indeed, to be the object, the only object, of desire to all nations*. He includes *in himself* all we ought to desire, all we can desire ; the truth and reality of all which men do actually desire, but are erroneously pursuing in other objects, which can never satisfy the mind. Deceived by ten thousand objects of terrestrial vanity, but of *present* delight, man thinks not of the remedy which God has provided, nor flies to Christ for pardon, grace, and glory ; though, without these, there is a bitterness in



every cup of life, which will imperceptibly diffuse itself through the whole: and a dissatisfaction in all things, which will end in eternal sorrow. Yea, deluded by his carnal appetites, man approves not the only remedy of his diseased mind, and trifles with his danger, with the means of his recovery before him, till he dies eternally. Thus he is not only daily deceiving himself, but increasing his guilt, and ultimately loses the glories and the songs of heaven, and sinks into the dismal sorrows and lamentations of woeful regret and eternal despair. Bitter will then be the accusations of an irresistibly enlightened conscience; when the sinner, who had neglected the Saviour and his great salvation, will be compelled to behold him in all his glory, and his people in the full enjoyment of his blessings, but himself for ever excluded from the salvation he despised, cast out from His presence whom he had rejected, and banished from that kingdom of eternal glory, the hope of which he here bartered for empty vanities. Why so infatuated, thou perishing sinner, as to neglect this glorious Saviour, when all his majesty and mercy are so repeatedly displayed before thee, and thyself repeatedly solicited to become the happy partaker of his benefits? Why is the sacred word which conveys the descriptions of his excellencies so totally disregarded? Why are its convincing evidences, so graciously afforded by a God of mercy, so partially examined, so unwillingly admitted, or heedlessly passed by? Why that secret or allowed unbelief, in opposition to the clearest discoveries of truth? Why dost thou continue to deceive thyself with the hopes of empty vanities; and, when experience teaches thee the impossibility of finding happiness on earth, dost thou still renew the vain pursuit, incredulous to the testimony of Divine truth, though so correspondent with the facts which press on thy observation all around thee? How unreasonable, at least, not to try the experiment, to find that happiness in Jesus which experience teaches thee is not to be found on earth! How absurd to trifle when eternity is depending! If it is neglected till the

great decisive day, you will then, alas! find it too late;—too late you will feel the necessary conviction, when lost, lost eternally, lost beyond the remedy which once the Gospel offered; though then fully convinced of that which you could not believe on the testimony of God, that to have an interest in Christ can alone secure and bless an immortal soul. O Spirit of Jesus, let thy grace enlighten the mind, and incline the heart, that, convinced in time, while the blessings of salvation are before them, men may seek and find in that adorable Redeemer that which is the *light* and *life* and *glory* of an immortal soul. When this Divine teaching illuminates the mind,

2. He is *actually the Desire of his people, who know his preciousness, in all nations.*—When the Spirit of Jesus testifies of Jesus in the souls of his people, he fulfils his office as the Glorifier of Jesus. Hence, in whatever professing Christians disagree, in this all true Christians perfectly concur, to make the Lord Jesus their All in all; “to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” He is the one Foundation of their dependence; the one Object of their hope; the one Fountain of their salvation; the one End of their desire. They who know him delight in him; and they who delight not in him know him not. Ignorant of their state and danger through sin, the generality of mankind are, indeed, preferring ten thousand vanities, and see no beauty in the Saviour why he should be desired. A knowledge of our state as sinners is absolutely necessary for the knowledge of the Saviour: we shall never discover his glories, till we discover our own vileness and guilt. All who believe in him, perceiving that they are lost without him, perishing in their sin, the cause of all present misery, and of that greater and eternal misery which awaits the impenitent, taught to behold his suitableness to their ruined condition, fly to him for refuge, and find in him their fears relieved, and their wants supplied. Hence, in the experience of his grace, he becomes, to their admiring faith, the “altogether lovely.” He appears glorious in every view: in his wonderful person;



in all his undertakings, characters, and offices; his work is the object of their perpetual admiration; while the grace and blessings flowing from it upon their once perishing souls, render him infinitely precious as contemplated in faith. They adore him, as "set up from everlasting," as the Head of creation and redemption; in his condescension, sufferings, and victory, they behold the ground of all their hopes and enjoyments; in his glorified person they behold all fulness dwelling; from him alone they receive, as from the everlasting and overflowing Fountain of blessings. How can he, then, but be the object, the only Supreme object, of their desire and praise? He possesses the love of their hearts, and the honour of their lives. This is their disposition and aim on earth; and, when uniting around the throne, no note of discord shall ever interrupt the general song of heaven, "To him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood," &c. "to God and the Lamb," in the union of the eternal Spirit, shall be given the united, the undivided praise.

But, though few of all the nations, and few in any nation, have been yet so acquainted with the glories of the Saviour, as to make him the object of their supreme desire; yet a time, we trust, is coming, when he shall appear more illustriously to deserve this character, and *become the acknowledged object of desire to all the now benighted nations of the earth*. When the happy time shall arrive, we know not; but surely the time will come when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the seas:" when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise to diffuse all his brightest beams of glory throughout the world; and, like the natural sun, to visit every clime and region with his light and life and glory. Then the Jewish people, being recalled, at least, to the knowledge of their Messiah, if not (which is highly probable) to the possession of their own land, shall unite with the Gentile church in their love to, and adoration of, the once crucified, but now exalted, Jesus: and then "the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in." (Rom. xi. 12, 15, 25, 30, 31;



compare *Psa. xcviii. 1—3.*) Then shall the glorious *Shiloh* effect the “*gathering of the people*” to himself (*Gen. xlix. 10*): then shall he “have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth:” “all the families of the earth shall be blessed in him, all nations shall call him blessed.” Then shall this interesting character be literally fulfilled; the *great Blessor* shall be known of all, and glorified of all, and become the *Desire of all*, the earnest of his enjoyment and glorification by all his redeemed in the kingdom of heaven. Whose heart does not join the prayer and praise of the prophetic Psalmist, in contemplation of this delightful subject? — “Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things: and blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen.” (*Psa. lxxii. 18, 19.*) “In this all my prayers are consummated,” says the royal Prophet, in the fervency of love and ardour of his zeal;—for to such effect I apprehend should be the rendering of the closing sentence. Oh, for a similar ardour in our souls in this day, when the Spirit of God begins, as it were, to move upon the surface of the waters, about, we trust, to new-create the world! that we may be made the happy instruments of his power and grace; to our felicity and his own glory!

But, whether he be desired on earth or not, *all nations and people, and every individual who has ever sojourned on earth, will long for, and desire an interest in, him before the throne of judgment.* Then shall his suitableness and preciousness to sinners be indeed discovered and felt, either in the eternal happy effects of the enjoyment of him by his saints, or in the eternal miseries of being destitute of his salvation. When he comes again in his glory, “He shall come to be glorified *in* his saints, and to be admired *in* all them that believe;” not only *by* them, but *in* them. In the full enjoyments and glories of his people it shall appear, that all blessedness, all things desirable, are in him; and that out of him; and without him, man has nothing but misery and sin. This is now declared in

his *Word*, and faith discerns and feels the *truth*. But those who have here enjoyed some little of his excellencies by faith, shall then acknowledge, that the half hath not been told them. One glance of his heavenly glory shall so infinitely transcend, as to blot out, all the glories of earth from their remembrance, and render him the object of eternal desire, as he will be the object of inconceivable excellency and eternal admiration, to his glorified saints. Then those who are destitute of Christ and his salvation shall find that, without him, there is nothing which their souls can desire or enjoy in eternity; nothing but eternal sorrow.

Let us, then, study, and continually meditate upon, the glories and suitableness of our Jesus, till he become the only object of our present desire. Few, how few, alas! desire him now; because few see their need of him, and discern his excellencies; though their need is absolute and extreme, and his glories infinite and eternal. But the Gospel exhibits him, as in every respect correspondent to our wants, and possessing an infinite fulness of supply for our immortal souls. If faith contemplated more his perfections in the light of the Divine word, we should enter more into the spirit of his Apostle, and “account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.” Such was the language of the church of old:—“The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.” (Isa. xxvi. 8, 9.) Faith brings a similar view into the heart of the believer, who desires to know nothing but Christ; and his glory revealed from his throne shall eternally confirm his love and admiration.

By this, then, we may know, what is our true state. If amongst his people, enlightened and taught by his Spirit, and influenced by his grace, he will be precious, most precious, to us; the pearl most valuable; the object of our supreme desire. What think we, then, of Christ? Oh, how much is there in him beyond what the most enlarged faith ever comprehends or perceives on earth! The fulness of his glories can never be exhausted, and will, there-

fore, never be fully comprehended by his redeemed even in the heaven of heavens, though constantly receiving from that overflowing never-failing Fountain. The more we now perceive of his glories, and the more we enjoy them, the more evidently we discern that the prospect before us is boundless. But while “we know, with all saints, the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of his love,” in the midst of our clearest knowledge, we only perceive that “it passeth knowledge.” So shall it be through all eternity; and this will constitute the felicity of eternity; all its objects continually discovering fresh subjects of contemplation. How much more so, then, the glories and perfections of Jehovah, and the fulness of the Redeemer! Ever contemplated, never completely understood! Ever enjoyed, never exhausted! Never shall we have a full conception of the glories of the Saviour’s person, either in his essentially Divine, or assumed human, nature; or of their wonderful union in the person of IMMANUEL. Never shall we fully penetrate the mystery of redemption, the wonders of his love, or the fulness of his blessings. Thus while these things are rising in fresh displays throughout eternal ages, eternity itself shall afford still new subjects of adoration and praise, deeper views of Divine mysteries, and richer enjoyments of everlasting and redeeming love.

How, then, ought we to wonder at the coldness of our hearts, and the lukewarmness of our desires, when contemplating in the glass of the Gospel, in this lower world, the person, character, offices, and fulness of Jesus. Oh, let the thought excite a closer attention, and deeper contemplation! and may some bright beam of light break through this scene of terrestrial darkness to discover more of the Redeemer’s glories! Aim, believer, at larger views and larger desires; for thy present enjoyments will bear a proportion to the views and desires of faith. But soon shall every desire of thy renewed nature be satisfied in complete, uninterrupted, and eternal enjoyment. That vision of his glory which shall then break forth upon thy



astonished eyes, and that fruition of his blessedness which shall then fill all the powers of thy soul, will leave no room for inferior desires, because it will leave no wish unsatisfied. In the realms above, He who will be glorified *in* us, as "*all our Salvation,*" will be eternally glorified *by* us, as "*all our Desire.*"

## ESSAY XIII.

**Gift of God.**

A GUILTY sinner, poor and miserable, and yet helpless, must be indebted to some one for all that he receives and enjoys. To whom, then, should he feel himself more willing to be indebted than to the God of all grace? If He be willing to give, we may be well assured that his gift will be worthy of himself, and worthy of our attention; that it must be suitable to his own glory, and suitable to our state; all-sufficient for its design, and all-sufficient for our wants. And such is that glorious Gift of God of which the Gospel makes the discovery. The eternal Jehovah purposes to give to fallen creatures a gift of pure grace; his own eternal mind conceives the design; he lays the plan in the eternal counsels; he opens the rich treasures of infinite beneficence and love in the covenant of redeeming mercy, and there *He gives his only begotten Son* to be the Saviour of the world. In every point of view, how precious is the gift! In itself it is infinite,—in its grace it is unsearchable,—in its benefits it is eternal. May we *know* this Gift of God, and we shall learn to value it, till all beside will be esteemed but as dung and dross, in comparison with the “excellency of the knowledge of Christ,” and the possession of him as our eternal portion! This Gift includes in it all the mystery of Divine love; the wonder of redemption; the glory of the Gospel revelation: it will give animation to the eternal songs of heaven, and is the sweetest subject of believing contemplation on earth. May the glorifier of Jesus, his own Divine Spirit, and his

own great gift, now make it so to us, while we pursue our inquiry into its *nature* and its effects.

Here let it be observed, that we must not understand the term, *Gift of God*, as applicable to the Lord Jesus Christ, in any sense that is derogatory to his own essential glory, or the freedom of his own volition in giving himself for his people. It is as perfectly and as extensively true, that "He gave himself for his church," as that he was the "Gift of God" to us. This is spoken, therefore, according to the order of the covenant of redemption, fixed in the counsels of eternity, between the eternal Three in Jehovah. There, speaking after the manner of men, the covenant characters were assumed, and the Persons in Jehovah discovered their eternal love to man by mutual agreements in that wonderful design; and by each voluntarily engaging, and determining and devoting themselves and each other to their different parts in the accomplishing of the work. This, we said, was speaking after the manner of men; and this circumstance we ought always to remember in every description of these things, which are in themselves so far removed above our conception, and can only be understood when brought down to our observation by reference to human subjects. And herein we ought rather to admire the goodness of God, and endeavour to conceive of them as God has represented them in the Scriptures, than to object and cavil at the incompetency of earthly to represent heavenly objects. In this view we observe that there the grant was made by the Father, which was actually brought into effect when, "in the fulness of time, God sent forth his Son made of a woman," &c. The promise and the accomplishment were in time; but the determination was before all time; and every step in its progress was the effect of eternal love! Then Jesus, the same eternally in the undivided Essence, in the character of the Son of God, engaged to become the Mediator, and voluntarily undertook to be the Person *given* and sent to complete the counsels of Divine love. His *work* is consequently spoken of both as a *delegated office* and a *voluntary*



*act.* “The Lord Jehovah possessed him in the beginning of his way, before his works of old: he was set up from everlasting,” &c. (See Prov. viii.; and read the whole chapter in reference to the Christ, and there will appear in it a peculiar beauty.) The voluntary “*goings forth*” of him who was in time the *Child of Bethlehem*, in his love to man, “were of old, from everlasting.” (Mic. v. 2.) To this point, if we may so say, we must trace up the mystery of Divine love, that our admiration may be raised as to its freedom and its extent. Here we discover it to be as wonderful in its *origin* as in its effects: we join the Apostle, and say, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world,” &c. (Read Eph. i. 3—6.)

The *design* of this gift was for purposes most important to man: to fulfil the Divine arrangements in the economy of redemption; to transact the whole work of mediation, and effect finally the eternal salvation of his people. On the accomplishment of these purposes the hope of a guilty sinner rests; and it is only as faith discovers these grand truths, works, and blessings, clearly revealed in the testimony of God, that the believer’s expectations revive, and his heart rejoices in Christ Jesus. *Given* for these purposes, it is the great design of the Scriptural record to shew us that he has in himself an all-sufficiency for the work; that he *has* accomplished it in all its suffering and meritorious parts, and that he now gives all covenant blessings freely and fully to his redeemed. Hence, though there is no other name in which there is salvation, “in him, all who believe are justified from all things.” (Acts iv. 12; compare xiii. 38.)

Every situation of sorrow, in which he appeared on earth, is to be considered as the consequence of this design, as some further step in its fulfilment; some fresh or continued act of grace towards completing the Gift of God. To accomplish these purposes he was given—“to take upon

him our flesh," "the nature of his brethren." In consequence of his appointment and undertaking in the counsels of eternity, "*a body was prepared for him.*" This was the first subject of prophecy and promise to fallen man, because of its primary necessity in completing the design. He was, therefore, first revealed as "*the Seed of the woman*;" then "*the Seed of Abraham*;" afterwards "*the Offspring of David*;" then "*the Child born, and the Son given, IMMANUEL, born of a Virgin*;" that his human nature, though like ours in its infirmities, might be free from all the contagion of our sin.

In this nature the Father gave him to be *a servant*: though, had he given him to reign over all the monarchs of the earth, his love and grace had been equally unsearchable. For the difference between the lowest and the highest of the sons of men is lost, quite lost, in that which subsists between the nature of man in any state, and that of the eternal Jehovah. As the Son of man, "he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," &c. (Matt. xx. 28.) The infirmities and sorrows of his human nature, the bitter and cruel death upon the cross, with all the unparalleled sufferings which led thereto, were but the effect, the designed and necessary effect, of his submitting to such an office. It was as such that he gave himself to pay our debt which we could never pay, to endure our curse which had overwhelmed us with infinite sorrows, and to bear the punishment of our iniquities, which had otherwise sunk us in eternal death. Constituted as our *Surety* under the Law, he took the bitter cup of sufferings and exhausted its contents. "To redeem us from the curse of the Law, he became a curse for us." (Gal. iii. 13.) He exposed himself between justice and the guilty sinner ready to perish by the stroke of its uplifted arm. His high omnipotent head raised itself against the storm that was ready to fall, and sheltered us. For this he was set apart in eternity, and all the agonies he endured, all the torments of hell in his soul, when that soul was "*made an offering for sin*," were in the design and adjustments of the covenant, "that the chastisement



of our peace might be upon him, and that by his stripes we might be healed." For "it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation *perfect through sufferings*." (Heb. ii. 10.) And thus "God commended his love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

In consequence of this, He is now the *Gift of God* in the Gospel invitation and promise. The Lord Jehovah says to the fearful penitent, "Behold my Servant." He is exhibited as the foundation of our hope, and the fountain of our blessings. It is the *command* of God, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ; and the Divine record is, that "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." The gift is effectually given to, and actually received by, all his believing people, who, having Christ by faith, in him have all things. These considerations give us a most beautiful and encouraging view of God's method of salvation. For if the Author and Depositary of all its blessings be a gift of God, then the whole must be a gift; and the greater gift secures the less. The gift of him, in whom and by whom are all things, who is the All in all, must secure every blessing in him; and the Apostle's reasoning is conclusive: "If God hath given us his Son, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

But in order to shew more the value of this gift, and to enhance our regard to it, let us contemplate it in its *necessity*. A superfluous gift is of no value; but, when it is the mean of deliverance from danger and distress, it then rises proportionally in our estimation and desire. If we admit the truth of the word of God, and acknowledge our state to be as it is there described, the value of this gift will appear immense. Few are really convinced of this, and therefore few value the gift of Christ; and none, without the teaching of the Spirit of Christ, will discern their misery or his glory. The state of a sinner without Christ is described in Scripture as infinitely dangerous, and eter-



nally miserable. Guilt and depravity will hasten destruction. There is nothing within or around us that can obtain pardon, recommend us to God, or save a lost and perishing sinner. None but Jesus could undertake and accomplish the work of redemption; and consequently, without him, we could have had “*no hope.*” He, therefore, that “hath not the Son of God, hath not life.” “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (Comp. 1 John v. 12, and John iii. 36.) The very appointment and nature of the work of Christ implies that we are lost without him, for it is a salvation for the lost. None can value it but those who feel themselves in this state; and to those he is precious. What a *necessary gift*, then, is Christ to such sinners, thus involved without him in remediless ruin! Unbelief of this is the grand delusion of mankind. Survey, however, but for a moment, with the eye of faith, the consequence of such a state; and bring before the mind the anguish of a lost soul, eternally lost from God and heaven, and heavenly joys, and sinking in the pit of sorrow, “where hope never comes;” and then let the trembling spirit say how important is the *gift of Christ*, the only “Deliverer from the wrath to come!” We must be fully convinced of the absolute necessity of being “found in Christ, not having our own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of faith in Christ.” For if the gift be necessary, it is equally necessary that we should receive it, that it should become ours, and that we should be put into the actual possession of it, in order to our enjoyment of its advantages.

The consideration of the *nature* of this gift will open to us many other views, which will tend greatly to increase our regard and admiration. Here it will appear,

(1.) As a Gift *most suitable* to men. Notwithstanding the infinite distance between his glory and their meanness, He is given in such a manner as to be most suitable to their state. It is, indeed, impossible but that the designs and appointments of the infinitely wise God must be suitable to answer their great objects; and therefore the Gospel, however misun-

derstood and contemned by the carnally wise, is found to be “the wisdom and the power of God, to the salvation of him that believeth.” It is a discovery of “the *manifold wisdom of God*” to those who are best able to investigate and to discern it in all its parts, even “to powers and principalities in heavenly places.” (Eph. iii. 10.) We, alas! are very incompetent to judge of the purposes and the ways of God, and have neither inclination nor ability to discern them aright, till enlightened by the Spirit of wisdom and of grace; and even then we “see but in part, and know but in part.” Our knowledge is exceedingly defective, not only in degree but in nature. “Oh, how little a portion is known of him!” But two parts of the believer’s knowledge always hold a proportion to each other,—the knowledge of his own sin, guilt, and helplessness; and of the suitableness of the Saviour’s work and grace for his deliverance from sin, and his final salvation. As he feels and laments over his state under the Law, he rejoices in the grace of the Gospel; and the character and work of Christ, as he is there revealed, fully meets his various wishes and wants. Faith is still searching out, and there discovering, more and more of his glories, as experience teaches him more and more of his own necessities; and as these glories are, in the first exercises of the Christian life, the objects of faith, so they become increasingly the subjects of experience. He meets in Christ from time to time a correspondent supply for all; while the Spirit, in his word, ordinances, and influences, “takes of the things of Christ, and reveals them to the heart.” Thus his faith is more confirmed, his views of the Redeemer are more exalted; and he is enabled to wait and hope for the time to come, and to expect every needful blessing to the end. What God has given was designed to be, and therefore must be, most suitable to the wants, to the complete salvation, of a sinner, in all its parts, and all its blessings! This is the object of a believer’s faith, and experience teaches him its reality and truth. It is, also,

(2.) A Gift *most free*. The freeness of this gift is its



great excellency. It was the sovereign act of grace, of goodness unmerited and unsought. The gift of his Son can only be the act of his own grace, since no inducement could be offered to incline or excite to a bestowment so immense, a sacrifice so infinite ! What in heaven or in earth could ever make the purchase, or offer any thing in remuneration ? Though absolutely necessary, it must be absolutely free. “ Herein is love ! ” Herein is the greatness of the grace : that which rendered it necessary rendered us totally unworthy. The gift was to rebels, to enemies, to condemned transgressors. “ When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son,” &c. (Rom. v. 10.) “ Christ died for the ungodly.” (ver. 6.) “ While we were yet sinners.” (ver. 8 ; comp. 1 John iv. 10.) The freeness of the original appointment, and *the constitution of grace*, is too evident to be denied ; nay, of all its steps, till it meets us freely in the Gospel. But it is equally true that the gift of Christ into the heart of his people is equally free. If he were given for such as the Lord knew would slight and despise his undertaking, till the Spirit of his grace effectually inclined their hearts, of what use would the whole of this work be, unless provision were made for their effectual calling by his grace, in the plans of the eternal covenant ? Hence it is a fact, that “ He is found of them who sought him not.” (Isa. lxxv. 1.) How many who have received him by faith, can well remember when they despised and rejected both his person and his salvation, refused the messages of his grace, or at least rejected with careless indifference the invitations of his love ! There is a freeness in all the gifts of grace, to the alone and the eternal honour of the Giver. This is evident in every step, from the eternal purpose of grace, to the eternal consummation. Those who most fully experience the blessings, will most cheerfully confess this truth, while they most admire, adore, and praise that Spring of all their glories and enjoyments. It is also,

(3.) A Gift *all-sufficient*. The fulness of the Redeemer is the constant subject of the Scriptural testimony. There



he is discovered as in *himself*, and in his mediatorial excellency; as possessing infinite fulness, as having “all power in heaven and in earth,” as “Head over all things.” What, then, can be wanting in him? If we look by faith at the blessings which are in him, and of which the Father testifies by his Spirit in his word, what can the sinner want? what can the believer desire more? Given into our *nature* as the Surety of the better covenant; given to the *cross* as the sacrifice for sin; given up to the *claims of justice* and the arm of Divine vengeance; drinking up the cup of wrath, and emptying out its deepest dregs; he has opened \* our way to God, and obtained eternal redemption † for his people. Set forth as the propitiation, we have redemption through his blood ‡, even the forgiveness of our sins: through him all who believe are justified from all things §; and, being justified, we have peace with God ||, and are brought into a standing, or *state*, of gracious acceptance\*\*. To as many, therefore, as receive him, he gives the power and the privilege †† to become the sons of God; and, being sons ‡‡, he sends the spirit of a son into their hearts, that they may sweetly appropriate the privilege and character, crying, *Abba, Father*. Thus he seals them to the day of redemption §§; yea, in him as the victorious and exalted Mediator is such grace and power deposited, that he of God ||| is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that we might have sufficient cause always to triumph and glory in him. He is, therefore, the all-sufficient Saviour for the chief of sinners. For since “grace and truth come by Jesus Christ,” “where sin abounded grace shall much more abound \*†, and where sin hath reigned unto death, grace now reigneth through his righteousness unto eternal life †\*.” To this truth the Apostle bore his testimony, as being amply confirmed by his own expe-

\* John xiv. 6.    † Heb. ix. 12.    ‡ Eph. i. 7.    § Acts xiii. 39.  
 || Rom. v. 1.    \*\* Rom. v. 2.    †† John i. 12.    ‡‡ Gal. iv. 6.  
 §§ 2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. i. 13; iv. 30.    ||| 1 Cor. i. 30.  
 \*† Rom. v. 20.    †\* Rom. v. 21.

rience: "The grace of our Lord," says he, "was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus:" proving that "it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." To the believer every blessing opens in the fullness of the Redeemer. What glorious designs, what gifts of grace are connected with the gift of Christ! When faith believes and receives, what else can be needed? Pardon and acceptance, a state of grace and favour, adoption and a child-like spirit, entering into the glorious privilege; peace with God, holiness, spiritual strength continually renewed; hope on earth, and glory in heaven, yea, *all things in Christ* \*. We may come *with boldness* †, when we come in the faith of Jesus, to the Throne of Grace, assured that we shall obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in every time of our need. Truly he became poor, that he might make us rich ‡. And a reconciled God in him is able to make all grace abound towards us, that we, always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work §. And he will supply all our need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus ||. How invaluable that gift which includes so many, so vast, such infinite, blessings! Review the glorious assemblage as they have now passed under our contemplation; blessings of grace in the present life, but never truly unfolding their excellency here, never fully understood on earth; eternity alone shall reveal their excellency, and that in an eternally increasing discovery, in "an eternal weight of glory." The gift of God is not measured by the merit of the receiver, but his own dignity and honour, and is worthy of himself to give. It is, therefore,

(4.) *An unsearchable Gift*.—Who can ever understand what is included in it? The Apostle calls it "the unsearchable riches of Christ." It is unsearchable in its *origin*; in the grace and love from whence it flows, even

\* 1 Cor. iii. 22. † Heb. iv. 16. ‡ 2 Cor. viii. 9. § 2 Cor. ix. 8.

|| Phil. iv. 19.

the sovereign purpose of the Divine Mind. Well might the Apostle exclaim, in the consideration of it, “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Rom. xi. 33—36.) In its own *nature* it is unsearchable. It is the gift, not of a man, nor of an angel, nor of all created intelligences, even all the hosts of heaven. What so great love had been manifested in this?—a creature for a creature! But it is the gift of him who is infinitely beyond and above them all—their Creator, and the object of their willing adoration; the Son of God’s eternal love; *his only begotten; his only beloved; his own; his equal; his co-eternal Son!* We need not, then, be surprised at the manner in which Scripture represents the greatness of this love. We may be assured that our highest views are far beneath its dignity and glory, and that our hearts never are, nor ever can be, suitably and correspondently affected with its excellency and value. “If (says an old divine) all the mountains of the earth were diamonds; if all its dust were the gold of Ophir; if the circumference of heaven were piled with precious stones, they would not altogether be worth the little finger of Jesus Christ.” (Robison’s “Christ all in all.”)—Who ever did, who ever can, value this Gift of God enough? It is as unsearchable in the depths of mercy to which it descends, as to the *subjects* for which it was designed, and to which it is actually given and applied;—not the angels of his presence, nor those spirits once high in glory, now fallen from their excellency,—but man, ruined man, in a state of rebellion against his Creator; a sinner despising and rejecting his grace, till that grace itself triumphs over his guilt and obstinacy; often passing by the apparently virtuous and self-righteous, and descending to embrace and save the chief of sinners. The *methods* in which it has been bestowed are equally unsearchable. The sufferings of the Son of God; the agonies of the Garden; the Cross, and the Grave; are considerations which may well excite our highest wonder, as being the appointed means



of life and salvation to dying sinners ! The *leadings, also, of providence and of grace*, whereby, under the direction and teaching of the Divine Spirit, the application is made to the heart, will, in the end, perhaps, appear equally unsearchable, as discovering the varied wisdom, goodness, truth, and faithfulness of a covenant God. And, when the *fulness of its blessings* shall be unfolded in eternity, angels and the innumerable company of the redeemed, may desire eternally to look into it; may satisfactorily enjoy it; but shall never be able fully to comprehend it.

Then, O believer, while contemplating this Gift of God, and contemplating it as thine own, if thus having Christ, you should want many things here below, many things which our earthly minds are apt to conceive necessary for our peace and happiness, recollect that you possess that which is beyond all in value ; which can make up for all ; which, when faith is in exercise to realize it, can give more joy than all created good, and can do you good when all things else shall fail. Oh, how sweet the moments when you enter into your privileges, in the seasons of retirement, or in the house of God ; and rise above all the joys or sorrows of this lower world ! But, above all, do not dishonour the character of this Saviour, nor discredit his fulness, by still adhering to earth, and thus proclaiming to the world your dissatisfaction with his blessings. This will too plainly evince either your ignorance of Christ, or your unbelief, or your little experience of his grace, or your earthly-mindedness and sensuality, or all these together. The true enjoyments of faith will make all the joys of sense appear poor ; and, when simply “rejoicing in Christ Jesus,” you have “no confidence in the flesh,” He will be to you better than all beside. Well may we then add,

(5.) This Gift is *an unspeakable Gift*.—Who can ever speak its origin, its nature, its blessings, or its extent ? Who can ever proclaim its glories ? This incomprehensible love can never be fully magnified and praised : like its Divine Author and Giver, it is “above all blessing and praise.”

We praise our God for the *gift of life and being*: we praise him for the *bounties of providence*, and the *blessings and comforts of earth* for a dying body: we praise him still more for the *powers of an immortal soul*, and the *blessings suited for its enjoyment*: but, if for these we never can adore and praise him as we ought, how shall the highest creatures, in all their united adorations, speak the *glories of redeeming love*, which rescued both body and soul from hell, and which “appointed us to salvation?” But, if the *blessings of salvation* are beyond our praise, Oh, how much farther still must that GREAT, BEST GIFT OF GOD rise beyond our most exalted admiration, which is the cause of all, in which they all centre and are included, and from which alone they flow,—THE GIFT OF JESUS!

(6.) This Gift is also an *eternal Gift*.—Eternity will be employed in discovering still more and more of its opening excellencies; still shall we be perceiving increasing reasons for admiration and thankfulness. As the gift itself is eternal, so is the glory which will flow from it. And if eternity will leave us *far* behind in conceiving and expressing the true value of all the other gifts of covenant grace, even eternity itself will leave us *infinitely* behind in exalting and glorifying this *great Gift* of God, the “*Word made flesh*,” “IMMANUEL, GOD *with us*!”

It is surely, then, the first, the highest wisdom of man, the most useful, the most necessary, to know and understand this Gift of God. To know *who he is*; this will excite our admiration and love: to know *why he was given*; this will encourage our confidence of access: to know *how he may be received*; this will direct us how to come aright to him in faith: to know *when and how we may make use of him*; the promises of his Gospel will teach us this; will encourage us to come at all times, and dispel all our unreasonable and unbelieving fears. Study, then, O believer, those precious promises which make over to the believing sinner, *freely and fully*, the *all-sufficiency of Jesus*. It is the neglect of this that often keeps your mind in darkness, distresses your conscience, and weakens the

powers and spiritual activity of your soul. How wise soever a sinner may be, without the knowledge of Christ he has as yet attained no useful knowledge, no knowledge at all for eternity. "He knows nothing yet as he ought to know," since all his knowledge will leave him to perish in his sins, and afford him no resource, "no help, when God taketh away his soul." That awful moment will prove the judgment of the Apostle to be just, and will teach us, that all knowledge, or all excellencies beside, are but as dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

But let us recollect that this knowledge is not the knowledge of the head, but of the heart. A gift is for acceptance and enjoyment, and surely God's best Gift deserves our most cordial acceptance. Have we, then, received him as the Word of truth exhibits him, and for the purposes for which God has appointed him? This is the most interesting of all questions. May the Spirit of the Lord lead us to a serious inquiry, and a faithful answer! If a penitent sinner accept of Christ, he may be assured of all he can want in him. Fear not on account of your unworthiness and guilt: the salvation of *a sinner* must be pleasing to the Father, since he gave his Son for that very purpose, and he that has given Christ, his beloved Son, for sinners, will assuredly deny nothing to those who are willing to receive him, since nothing can be greater or more than he.—Fear not that your petitions, however broken, weak, or unworthy, shall be denied, which ascend to and through him;—fear not that your immortal soul shall perish, which is committed to his keeping;—fear not any want, since all is in him. Trust in him for all, and you shall glorify him in the enjoyment of all which he sees good in time, and of all glory in eternity. His promise is your security, and this ensures grace and glory, and every thing that he sees really good for you between. He cannot need, then, who has Christ, the Gift of God, in his heart.

The greatness of the Gift will, indeed, render those in-



excusable who neglect or reject it. This is the great sin of the world—"of sin, because they believe not on me." This will be its last condemning sin: "This is the condemnation, that (this) light is come into the world; and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." If we are living insensible of our need of Christ in his undertaking, glorious character, and offices, work of redemption, and blessings of salvation, and as, in all, the Gift of God to sinners, the greatest of all blessings will become to us the greatest curse. If self-confidence and self-righteousness despise the grace of the Saviour, we shall never be interested in it. If an earthly and carnal mind disrelish his salvation, we shall never partake of its glories. Whatever may be our profession, we are but denying the Saviour, and refusing this *Gift of God*. And "if they who refused Moses' law died without mercy, &c., of how much sorer punishment shall they be thought worthy, who have trodden under foot the Son of God?" &c. (See Heb. x. 28, 29.) He was given for the lost and perishing, and none but the lost and perishing will ever value and seek after his salvation; but, blessed be the grace and faithfulness of our God, none who seek his salvation shall be denied its blessings. "He came to save his people from their sins;" and those who receive him by faith, feel the power of his grace, the virtue of his death and resurrection, and the faithfulness of his promise; and in him they shall triumph over all their guilt and corruptions. This Gift of God *in the heart* will bring all its blessings with it, and secure to his people their enjoyment through time and eternity.

How, then, shall such sinners, so highly favoured, discover that gratitude which such grace deserves? Not with our lips only. No: let him have the glory of all the powers of our minds, the affections of our hearts, the conduct of our lives. Let him have the glory of our *faith*, in its most steady confidence and reliance. Study, then, O believer, to understand more of his undertaking, his person, his work, and his blessings, till your love is established

and confirmed, prevailing above all creature-love, all carnal desire, or earthly gratification. The more we know of him, the more shall we admire and adore him; the higher will be our confidence of faith; the sweeter will be the communication of, and our fellowship in, his love. Our songs of gratitude on earth will savour of the spirit of heaven, and, anticipating their views and temper, we shall anticipate their joys. But the immortal powers and faculties of the heavenly world will alone enable us to offer to the *eternal* JEHOVAH, our *covenant God*, any suitable return of praise, or to adore aright that eternal love, from whence we have received *the unspeakable* GIFT OF CHRIST!





ESSAYS  
ON  
ALL THE SCRIPTURAL NAMES AND TITLES  
OF  
CHRIST.

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*FOURTH SERIES.*



## FOURTH SERIES.

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### ESSAY I.

#### LORD :

#### Adon—Adonai.

THERE are two names in the original Scriptures, JEHOVAH and ADONAI, which, though materially different in their signification, our translators have indiscriminately rendered by the same term—viz. *Lord*—observing this only distinction, that the word *Lord*, when it is the translation of the Hebrew name JEHOVAH, which is the term of essence, is constantly, when alone, printed in capitals, which is not the case when it is the translation of the name ADON, or ADONAI\*.

This title of Christ, which is the subject of our present inquiry, comes from אֲדָנָי, a root which signifies the *basis*, *pillar*, or *socket*, upon which a building rests, or by which the other parts of a building are regulated ; and from hence it is used to denote *support*, *authority*, and *dominion*. It is applied both to God and man,—to any one in whom *power* or *protection* is vested : thus “ Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord (אֲדָנָי).” (1 Pet. iii. 5 ; compare Gen. xviii. 12.) But it must certainly have a much more exalted sense when applied to God, than to man : it then denotes Him who is the *foundation or basis* of all created being, the source of all

\* This remark is worthy of serious attention to the English reader, that whenever the term LORD is in capitals, the original is JEHOVAH : whenever it is not, it is ADON, or ADONAI. Unless as explained in the following note.



power and authority, the stay of universal nature, the supporter of all things. This term is therefore frequently in the original Scriptures united both with **JEHOVAH**\* and **ALEIM**, and is evidently considered as implying one and the same person†. Hence it appears, that He who eminently bears this title is a Person in **JEHOVAH ALEIM**: and it is as evident, from many passages of Scripture, that this Person in **JEHOVAH ALEIM** is the promised Redeemer, “set up from everlasting” in all his mediatorial glories, and in time the glorious expectation of the Jewish nation, as their Messiah, and finally appearing as the Lord Jesus, the Christ. We are now to consider it in reference to him; and, as such, it is suitable for the introduction of another series, being a name of essential Godhead. It is also a name of Him who in himself possesses all power as “*Lord of all*” (Acts x. 36), and who, as Mediator, possesses all *for us*; so that every individual believer may say, “*My LORD and my GOD.*” And, if faith embraces the adorable Saviour in this character, every fear will be dissipated, hope will rise into confidence, and love will flow out into cheerful submission and obedience.

That the term **ADON**, or **ADONAI**, is frequently united with **JEHOVAH** and **ALEIM**, there will be no need to prove to those who are acquainted with the original Scriptures; and, where it is so, it will be evident even to an English reader, by attending to the observation in the preceding note. Its application, as thus united, to the Messiah, will be equally obvious to a candid inquirer. The vision of the Prophet Isaiah, in his sixth chapter, is the vision of **ADONAI JEHOVAH** (ver. 1, 3, 5, 8, &c.); but the Evangelist

\* The ancient Jews were so superstitious, that, afraid to pronounce the glorious name **JEHOVAH**, they have frequently corrupted the text, and altered it to **ADONAI**, as is proved by many ancient copies.—See Lowth.

† Our translators have invariably rendered **ADONAI JEHOVAH** by Lord God, with *God* in capitals, and *Lord* not; and have translated **JEHOVAH ALEIM** exactly the same, only then the word **LORD** is put in capitals, and *God* not. When, therefore, it is printed **LORD God**, the original is **JEHOVAH ALEIM**: when **Lord God**, it is **ADONAI JEHOVAH**.

tells us it was the vision of Christ. (John xii. 41.) The *Shepherd* of his flock, whose coming is foretold in the fortieth chapter of that Prophet, is the ADONAI JEHOVAH (ver. 10, 11), and the ALEIM (ver. 3, 9). No one, however, can doubt that this is a prophecy of Messiah, the Lord Jesus, the Saviour. Again, the Prophet Malachi (chap. iii. 1) speaks of him expressly under this character: "The ADON, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the Messenger (or, Angel) of the Covenant, whom ye delight in." But it is the very speaker himself whose way is thus to be prepared, and he is JEHOVAH (ver. 1 and 6; comp. Isa. xl. 3). The risen and victorious Redeemer is prophetically represented, under the same title, in Psal. cx. \*, as the ADON of his church, in whom alone all power in heaven and earth is vested for its salvation. Hence it is plainly manifest, that the scriptural ADONAI is *Christ*, the *Messiah*, who is also as plainly, in his Divine glories, JEHOVAH and the ALEIM. These proofs might be multiplied almost without number from scriptural references, if it were necessary, and were it suitable to the design of these Essays thus to enlarge; but sufficient has been said to convince the humble and sincere inquirer, who is willing to admit the simple testimony of Divine truth, and to submit to the declarations of the word of God. In this we every where observe increasing evidence of the Divine essential glories of the Lord our Redeemer. And when we bow in adoration before Him, we worship no mere man, no subordinate nor official Deity, but JEHOVAH our ADONAI, the *basis* and support of every thing in nature, grace, and glory, upon whom *all things rest*, and by whom all is sustained.

In aiming, through the course of this Essay, to illustrate these important views, we will observe, first, that He is the ADON in *creation*, the *Basis and Supporter of all existence*. Hence he is the absolute, the all-sufficient, and sovereign *Lord*, with power and authority over all. The

\* Compare, also, Gen. xv. 1, 2; Psal. viii. 1, and xvi. 2; Isa. iv. 4, and xxv. 8; Dan. x. 16.

latter of these ideas is what we generally attach to the term Lord ; but the original term includes much more : when expressed by the name ADON, or ADONAI, it seems to imply that all existence arose at his creating word ; that it rests upon his sovereign will ; that it obeys his command ; that *it is*, or *is not*, at his pleasure.

The first species of idolatry seems to have been, a departure from the CREATOR to the *creature* ; from the sovereign independent Author and Cause of all, to his constituted agents in nature. When God had already revealed himself as the Creator, no doubt the works of creation every where afforded convincing proofs of the fact to every careful observer, and yielded bright and clear manifestations of his glory. But so far were either nature or reason from *finding out* this fact, that they miserably corrupted it, when revealed ; and the heathen world soon lost the idea of a CREATOR. The Apostle Paul has described, in the clearest manner and in the strongest terms, the progress of this error, and traced it up to its source in the depraved inclinations of mankind. He tells us, that when God had *shewed to them*, perhaps by *original revelation*, what might be known of him, and, by his visible works of creation, and the things which he *had made* or wrought in the course of his providential dispensations, had rendered clear “ the invisible things of him, even his eternal power and Godhead ;” yet even then, thus instructed to know God, originally by revelation, and constantly by creation and providence, “ they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful ; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up unto uncleanness,” &c., till they “ changed the truth of God into a lie” (the true God for lying idols), “ and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.” (See Rom. i. 19—25.) The



Apostle details the awful and more particular effects in the Gentile nations in ver. 25—22. This, it is evident, was the origin of all idolatrous worship.

When, therefore, the God of Israel led his chosen tribes from Egypt to the land of promise, the great distinctive excellency and glory which he claimed above all the gods of the heathen around them was, that of being the *absolute and sole Creator of all things*. And this is his continued claim by all the Prophets. He is “the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth,” &c. (Isa. xl. 25—28.) “The Lord (JEHOVAH) is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.” He is also the first, efficient cause of all the changes which take place in them, which were worshipped as deities by the Gentile nations. “When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens,” &c. (Jer. x. 10—16.)

There is such an infinite distance between *being* and *not being*, the fact of its springing into *existence* out of *non-existence* is so far beyond our conception, that no course of unassisted, unenlightened reasoning ever did, or ever could, lead man up to the original conception of it. It soon began to be doubted, disbelieved, or denied; and continued, generally, to be so in the heathen world. A former and arranger of pre-existing matter, they could conceive of, but not of the Creator, who spake the original matter *out of nothing*. No one, however, could tell how this matter came into previous existence, and the doctrine of infinite series led them up into infinite perplexity, though it never led them, nor could lead them, to a first *self-existent cause*. It is “*by faith* only that we understand

that the worlds were framed by the word of God," &c. The book of Revelation opens, therefore, with this claim; "In the beginning God *created* the heavens and the earth." And every interposition of supernatural agency in leading Israel through the wilderness, who were so prone to this species of *creature idolatry*, from their long sojourning in Egypt, was, to establish the fact, that he was the Creator and Governor of all those things which they were so foolishly inclined to worship: that He spake, and they were created; that when He now spake, they must obey. Thus he manifested that he was the ADON of all *creation*, and the Lord of all authority and power. This was the great matter of contest between the worshippers of Jehovah and the worshippers of idols. (See 1 Kings xviii. 21.) These, in the earlier ages of idolatry, we may suppose, were but the representations of the *material agents in nature*. And by every interposition of miraculous power, the glorious ADON of creation proved that the *elements* were not God; but that he himself had them all under his control, and was, therefore, the GOD of all their gods.

That this glory of *creation*, and support of universal nature, belonged to the Lord Jesus, the Apostle has decidedly declared (Col. i. 16), "By Him were *all things created* that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones," &c. God, who made the world (Acts xvii. 24), made all things by Jesus Christ (Eph. iii. 9): not as an inferior agent, but as a co-operator in all his works (Gen. i. 1; compare ver. 26), as set up, in his *economical character*, from everlasting, as the Head of all existence, and as the *Word* by which all the outgoings of Divine power were produced and directed, and the works designed in the purposes of Jehovah were effected. He also, by whom all the wonders of old were performed on the behalf of his ancient church, was none other than the *Angel* JEHOVAH; the *Angel of the Lord*; the Angel of the Covenant; the *Presence*, the *Angel of the Presence*. (See Exod. xxxiii. 14, 15, 18, 23; and xxxiv. 6.) But

who was this person? It has been evident, in several of these Essays, that this was none other than a bright manifestation of the future Messiah (Mal. iii. 1), equally bearing the character, and performing the office, of the Mediator before and after his incarnation, though in a different dispensation, and, therefore, under a different appearance. To Him, then, belongs also this glory as the ADONAI JEHOVAH. He is the *Lord of lords*, the *God of gods*, who hath power to do all he wills, and authority to command and direct whom and what he pleases. If the fire, the air, the waters, were the objects of idolatrous worship, his miraculous interpositions of old proved that these were but his agents on earth, his obedient creatures. The sea and the overflowing Jordan prepares, at his command, "a way for his ransomed to pass over:" the winds divide or bring back the mighty waters. The heavens from above drop down their food for them; the cloud becomes stationary over the camp, and either covers, precedes, or follows them, clothed with darkness, or shining with the brightest light. The fire obeys the same directing voice; the earth itself trembles at the mount of Sinai; and all the elements together obey and glorify their Lord. Yea, the *sun* and *moon* themselves, those most glorious objects of heathen adoration, those tabernacles of light, are arrested in their course in submission to his word; all testifying that the powers of nature are his, and all under him, in absolute and irresistible control.

When this glorious ADON took our nature, and "appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh," he repeats the same acts of Godhead. The miracles of Jesus prove that he possesses the same power and authority over all; that he is the very "ADON, the *Lord* whom they sought, come to his temple," while yet it remained. The very "*Angel of the Covenant*," once the Leader, and long the ardent desire and the delight, of the Jewish church. (Mal. iii. 1.) The sea spreads like molten brass beneath his feet, and all the elements, as of old, obey his voice. Well might



the admiring disciples cry out, “What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?” (Matt. viii. 37.) Yea, even the invisible agents of the spiritual world acknowledge themselves his servants. Angels minister to him, while they adore; and in his distress and sufferings, support and comfort his human nature. “With authority he commands the evil spirits, and they obey him:” devils acknowledge his Divine glory, submit to his authority, and tremble at his word. What a view of the LORD our Saviour! He is the sovereign, self-sufficient, all-sufficient Lord of all creatures in heaven, in earth, or in hell. This is the full meaning of the name ADONAI, when applied to the Lord Jesus Christ; and who can hesitate to apply it to him in all its glory? He, as such, is the *Basis of all creation*, who was “before all, and by whom all things consist.”

He is, also, the ADON in providence, the *Basis and Supporter of all providential authority*: or, the sovereign, absolute, and all-sufficient Lord, in all the dispensations and conduct of universal government. This, no doubt, follows from the preceding considerations. He who is the basis of creation, and on whose absolute will all creation rests and is dependent, must govern and direct all things at his pleasure: every dispensation in the course of nature or providence must equally rest upon his sovereign will, and be dependent upon him: as “by him all things were created, by him all things consist,” or hold their stated places, harmony, and order. The New-Testament character and office of the Redeemer is, “the Head over all things to his church;” a character the very counterpart of that Old-Testament name which we are now considering. And though this office be exercised through his human nature, on the throne, the throne above can only belong to him: nor can the glorious acts of universal government be performed but by him who possesses Divine power and glory. Thus our Jesus hath all-sufficiency of power and ability; for, though he is “of the seed of Abraham ac-

cording to the flesh," yet is he "over all, God blessed for ever." (Rom. ix. 5.)

This, indeed, is the only suitable Saviour of sinful men. He, therefore, who was the very *Basis* of *creating power*, undertook to be the Redeemer of his church, and then the *Basis* of its support. But, to manage the concerns of the church, it is evident that all the concerns of the world must also be under him; otherwise, by a partial view of things, fatal errors might arise; he might be deceived in his judgment, be frustrated in his designs, or fail in the purposes of his love. But it is the confidence of his believing people, that "their *Lord* reigneth." He reigns upon his mediatorial throne, and "shall reign, till he hath put *all* enemies under his feet." His throne is established "of old, from everlasting." "He sitteth between the cherubim, be the earth never so unquiet." "Though clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." (Psal. xciii. 1, 2; xcvi. 1, 2; xcix. 1, and 1 Cor. xv. 25, &c.) He reigns with infinite and unerring wisdom, with absolute and uncontrollable power, with consummate holiness, with sovereign and abounding grace, and with unchangeable and eternal dominion, "KING of KINGS, and LORD of LORDS!" And *he* shall overcome all that make war against him, or the church of his ransomed ones; and he shall accomplish all his purposes of grace and mercy, in their final redemption, and triumph over all their enemies. (Rev. xvii. 14.) What a different aspect do such considerations as these give to the circumstances which are taking place in the world around us? In his government his church may rejoice. The darkest clouds are but parts of his infinitely wise, though to us unintelligible, dispensations, and will no doubt tend to set forth, with peculiar advantage, the greatness of his wisdom and his love. His goodness, like the brightness of the sun, will break forth with additional lustre from behind these clouds of providence, till it shine in one unclouded day of glory beyond. It is the

Lord, the Lord Jesus; “ He who was dead, and is alive again ;” he who once died upon the cross, and arose to live for ever; he who so loved us, as to give himself for us to all the agonies of Gethsemane and of Calvary; who now reigns upon the throne of heaven, to accomplish the purposes of his redeeming love. He is no other than the glorious ADON; the Basis, the Stay, and the Supporter of all creation and providence, and by all these means, however little understood by us, he is guiding the affairs of his church to a glorious issue, and will “ make all to work together for good, to them who love God, and are the called according to his purpose.” The smallest circumstance, the most trivial event, is equally subject to his appointment, determination, or permission, as the greatest: in *creation*, the wing of a fly is as surely the product of his wisdom and power as the attributes of an archangel, and both are equally dependent upon his will. In *providence*, the minutest circumstance relating to the meanest of his creatures, much more of the lowest of his people, is equally under his direction, as the great events, upon which kingdoms, or even the universe, depend. How worthy of our faith and confidence, in the darkest scenes, is the *Lord* our Saviour! Worthy of our implicit reliance! When unbelief would doubt of the propriety of his ways, or his ability to help and guide us, let us recollect that he is the Lord of all providential authority and direction.

He is, also, the ADON *in grace*; the absolute, sovereign, all-sufficient, and everlasting Source of all. JEHOVAH, our ADONAI, is the *Basis and Supporter of all the displays of gracious dispositions and dispensations to guilty sinners; of all sanctifying virtue, and all spiritual blessings.* The glorious plan was laid in him from eternity: he is the ground of its rich discovery to us in all its grace and benefits; the Author and Supporter of that grace in all its degrees and in all its exercises in us. This is a most practical consideration, and is most useful when brought into experience by faith.



His undertakings in the counsels of eternity were the origin of all the dispensations of grace to man: his fulfilment of these undertakings, in the fulness of time, secures the communication of grace to all his people. If, then, we look to a "God of grace," it is "in Christ Jesus:" if we are partakers of grace, it is "out of his fulness:" if we are preserved in it, it is "by his almighty power." Independent of him, we have nothing. All, therefore, is laid up in him,—"*all fulness*,"—for our reception, by the will and appointment of the *Triune* JEHOVAH. What I am as a believer, I am only as in, and by, him. From his grace I have received it, that I am not still a rebel and a child of wrath; that I am delivered from going down to the pit; that I am reconciled to God, become a penitent sinner, or a believer in the name of Jesus; that I am regenerate and born again; renewed in the spirit of my mind, partaker of a new heart, filled with the love and devoted to the service of a God reconciled to me in him. As light issues only from the sun, and, in whatever refracted or reflected rays, or through whatsoever objects in nature, it meets our eye, must still be traced up to this source; so let us always recollect that grace issues only from the *Sun of Righteousness*. Our stability in faith and grace is proportioned to our resting upon him, and our enjoyments of grace are in proportion to our "living by faith" upon him. He is both the "Author and Finisher of faith." Our union to him by *his Spirit* is the source of all holiness; and his constant influences, as thus abiding in his saints, are the support of all Christian graces. If we abide not in him in the power of faith, we soon become lifeless and fruitless. Whenever we get into self-dependence, we fall quickly into sin and darkness; and as it is by his grace alone that we are made alive, and are partakers of a spiritual being, so from him alone, as the source of all grace, are we quickened and kept alive, or preserved in the exercises and enjoyments of the spiritual life. Thus our glorious ADONAI is the Lord of all grace, and, if we make him such by faith, we shall find him such in experience.

He is the ADON of *all glory*! In himself he is the *Lord of glory*! The *Basis of all the glories of the heavenly world*; the Spring of all; the Sum and Substance of them all: from him they arise; in him they centre; from his glorified person they are diffused around through all the realms above, and amidst the bright orders of the heavenly hosts. Those glorious orders received their being at his will; hold all their powers and faculties, however diversified and exalted, by his sustaining influence; their enjoyments spring from his presence; and their glories from union and communion with him! Not one ray of blessedness or of glory has ever been derived from any other source, nor shall be through eternity. To redeemed sinners, to elect and preserved angels, he is and will be the ground of their security, the plenitude of their felicity and their glory, without change, and without end. There he is acknowledged, in the eternity of his nature, *self-existent* before *created existence* received its being: from his *creating power* it sprung forth, by his *upholding power* it stands, in all its beauty and order, in all its faculties and enjoyments. His eternity alone is *self-dependent*, while all besides rests and depends on him.

But what gives excellency to this name, in its form of ADONAI (which signifies *my ADON*), is, that it encourages every believer to appropriate to himself his love, power, and care, and to call the Lord Jesus “*my Lord, and my God.*” The awful name JEHOVAH, as it is no covenant-name, but a name of essential glory and underived essence, implies in it no view of covenant mercy and grace: it may, therefore, justly make the sinner tremble. Who can stand before this holy Lord God? The covenant relations which he has assumed are what give peace to the conscience, and secure the hope of a penitent and believing sinner. And this covenant-name, while it implies in it his Divine power and glory, equally teaches me that they are engaged for me, for the redemption and salvation of my feeble guilty soul. In this mighty character he undertakes the work of redemption, and in this character he received his consé-

quent exaltation, when he had completed it. The work which he performed is strikingly described in Psa. cx., where he is peculiarly represented to us under this title: "The Lord" (the ADON) "at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath: he shall judge among the heathen," &c. "He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall he lift up his head." (ver. 5—7.) Thus, by his condescension, he obtained a right to rule and conquer all *for us*. "All that he is in his mediatorial undertaking and glory," may every believer say, "all *that* he is *for me*. This brings all his Divine power and infinite sufficiency near to me." How sweet, in this view, is the consideration of that almighty power, which otherwise must be the dread of my soul! How endearing the authority thus exercised for my good! How excellent that wisdom which is only exerted for the guidance and deliverance of his people! How satisfactory and glorious is the actual government of the redeeming ADON, who is over all things for his church! Let me contemplate and rejoice in the eternal excellency and infinite sufficiency of his power and grace. If I come to him as a poor perishing sinner, he hath "power to forgive all my iniquities:" he obtained the authority as Mediator, with "the price of his own blood." He is "GOD *my Saviour*:" he has power to quicken and regenerate my soul, to new-create and to renew his work from day to day. (Psa. li. 10.) He has the power and authority to cleanse and sanctify and purify daily for himself. He can bear with all my infirmities, for he is infinite in compassion; and deliver from all my temptations, for he is infinite in ability. He can cast out every enemy and accuser, till he has subdued all things to himself, and accomplished the victories of saving grace *in me*, as he hath already accomplished them *for me*, upon his cross. (Col. ii. 14, 15.) He hath ability to keep me safe from every danger, for he hath "all power in heaven and in earth;" and with that power he engages to give his sheep eternal life, so that they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hands. (John x.



28, &c.) He himself rests their security on this only, that he is JEHOVAH ADONAI, (*their ADON,*) and their God, “*who pleadeth the cause of his people.*” “What, then, shall separate us from the love of Christ,”...“from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?” (Rom. viii. 35, &c.)

Oh, what grounds of faith and consolation, yea, of perfect satisfaction, does this title of the Redeemer afford under all the varied circumstances of this uncertain life! He who is Lord of all will direct all for the good of his people. I may be assured no providential dispensation can hurt when he rules and directs it. The great Sustainer of all things, animate and inanimate, cannot be at a loss to supply the wants of his people, and afford them all which he sees good: whatever, therefore, he denies them, we may be sure that is the very thing which he sees would be dangerous or injurious for them to possess. He who fed his chosen tribes with bread from heaven, plainly proved, that “man does not live by bread alone,” or, by the common provisions and supplies of life, “but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God;” and that he can satisfy the wants of his people, either with or without the commonly appointed means, as he pleases. To have such a Friend, such a *Lord*,—what safety, what protection, what blessedness does it afford! “The Lord (JEHOVAH) reigneth, let the earth rejoice.” (Psa. xcvi. 1.) “Give *the King* thy judgments, O God; and thy righteousness to the *King’s Son*,” &c. “He shall judge the people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment,” &c. It is the peculiar glory of his dominion, that it embraces with its kindest and minutest attentions the poor and the spiritually oppressed. “He shall judge the poor of the people: he shall save the children of the needy, and break in pieces the oppressor.” (See the whole of Psa. lxxii.) What firm security, what inexpressible blessings, must belong to the people under his government!

Has this glorious *Lord* undertaken for us? Is he become mine? Have I made him such by faith and total

reliance upon his directing care? What can he not do for me? What may I not expect from him, while flying to him as my refuge, trusting in him as my strength, believing on him as my Saviour, and serving him as my *Lord*. All nature is at his control, all creatures are at his command, all fulness of grace is in him: safely may his church *rest all* upon him who is the eternal *Basis* and Supporter of all things; and rest confidently upon him *for all* who has in himself an infinite fulness of supply. His enemies, which are already conquered, shall soon be beneath his feet, and the same are the enemies of his church; and, if we are on the Lord's side, soon we also shall be "more than conquerors" over all, through him. "Look upon Zion: not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken; but there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams. For the LORD is our Judge, the LORD is our Lawgiver, the LORD is our King, &c. He will save us." (Isa. xxxiii. 21, 22.) Yea, he says, he is ADONAI, *my Lord*; he is mine by gift, mine by promise, and, if he is mine by choice, in faith and reliance, he will be mine, my portion, for ever. The Lord Jehovah has laid him in Zion, as the *Foundation*, the *Basis*, of my hope: I have nothing in myself, no place, no basis, of suitable stability and strength to rest upon for eternity; but He, who has done all for me, will be all to me, for "he careth for me." He, as the Lord GOD, the ADONAI JEHOVAH, is the stability and basis on which my immortal soul rests, with all its powers, and for all its enjoyments through eternity. And, as the Lord the Saviour, he is at present the stability of my grace, holiness, strength, and consolation, as he will be finally of all that glory which I hope to receive above.

How can I sink with such a prop,  
As my eternal God;  
Who bears the earth's wide pillars up,  
And spread the heavens abroad?

Flesh and heart must fail; but then “he will be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.” What a blessed, what a comprehensive title! how honourable to him! how consoling to his church! Be the glory thine, thou eternal, self-existent, self-sufficient, Lord! Be the consolation mine, by a strong and constant faith adhering to thee, as such, by peaceful resignation to thy always righteous will, and cheerful obedience to thy ever-just commands. He deserves, and he possesses, the worship and the praises of the heavenly host, as the *Adon*, the *Basis* and Sustainer of their being and their felicity. That divine worship which is alone the property of the Lord GOD, and which JEHOVAH “giveth not to another,” he gives to *our Jesus*: for it is the decree of God, that “all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father:” therefore he is *not another*, but *One with the Father*. “He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire; but to the Son he saith, Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever,” &c. And though, for a short time, “made a little lower than the angels” which he formed, still, as having a right to their adoration, “when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, Let all the angels of God worship him.” (Heb. i. 6—8.) His church on earth need not surely fear to join their worship, and thus to adore their Lord with all the honours of *God-head*.

But most especially he claims and deserves of all his church that honour which belongs to him as the *ADON of Salvation*, as the *Lord their Saviour*. Faith always gives him this, and brings the comfort of it into experience. When viewing him as the *self-existent* Lord, (which is the chief and primary idea included in the title,) and, as such, the basis of all existence beside, the Creator, Upholder, and Distributer of all things in nature, faith sees in him sufficient to rely upon in every perplexity, difficulty, want, or danger. (See Isa. xl. 26—31.) When viewing him as the everlasting *basis* of all covenanted



blessings, in the counsels of eternity, and having all the fulness of grace now alone treasured up in him, it sees sufficient ground for reliance through all the trials of life, the assaults of the enemy, the fears of death, or the prospects of an eternal state. Experience is daily teaching the real believer that he can obtain nothing without him, and thus it leads him to seek all from him, and to be daily looking to him in whom all strength and sufficiency lies. Thus, from faith in his promises, and repeated experience of his aid in former times of trial, he is taught, like the good old Patriarch, oftentimes "against hope to believe in hope;" to doubt not of his sufficiency, when all things else fail, but still to trust and rejoice in the Lord, as the God of his salvation. (See Hab. iii. 17—19.) This, indeed, is *strong* faith; but it has as strong a foundation to rest upon in the word of God, in the power, ability, and faithfulness of the eternal ADON. Oh, for more of this faith, in its more lively exercises, in the daily walk of the Christian; more of it in my own soul, as the sure support of our peace and joy, in every trying scene of life, the light of our souls in darkness; as our triumphant confidence, and source of daily victory over all our corruptions, enemies, and troubles.

While faith acknowledges him as such, he will receive from us the obedience of faith. The language of every believing heart will be, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The *self-sufficient Lord*, the *basis* of all our dependence and enjoyment, must be the object of our cheerful trust and obedience. The love of his heart, in making himself the basis of all covenant grace and mercy in our salvation, is beyond all our admiration and thanksgiving! His love demands, and surely it excites, all the returns that our hearts under the impression of such love can yield! His amazing condescension in the *work* of our salvation, claims our unreserved submission, and gives him an additional authority over us, and dearer property in us. Let "every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. ii. 11.)

O thou eternal ADON, “ Lord of all power and might,” behold, I am thine, and all I have and hope for is in thee. Let my understanding, my heart, my will, my affections, all my faculties, all my talents, be devoted to thee. All are thine, by gift of creation, by right of redemption ; and, while supported by thee in *being* and *felicity*, thine must be the eternal acknowledgments, and the eternal glory !

## ESSAY II.

**Apostle.**

THIS is one of the most encouraging and endearing characters of the Lord Jesus, as it brings him near to us, to our understandings and to our hearts, in the displays of his humiliation and his grace, implying a Divine mission and a delegated office. It may, however, at first sight, appear inconsistent with those titles which present him to our faith as the *Basis and Supporter* of all things in nature, providence, and grace ; but this is by no means the case. It is, indeed, distinct, and in some sense contrary, but not inconsistent. It must be evident to every candid reader of the sacred Scriptures, that the most distinct and apparently contrary characters are ascribed to our ever-blessed Lord, and the most wonderful extremes are attributed to his person, which must involve us in difficulties which we shall never be able to solve, without admitting the idea of his *two-fold natures* in his *one person*, and that he is “ *GOD and man in one Christ.*” Without this, it will be impossible to make the Scriptures speak a consistent language : and hence they who deny his Divine glories are driven to the miserable but only resource, of denying the authenticity of many parts of the sacred Volume, for no other reason but because they cannot understand them, or because they cannot accommodate them to their preconceived notions and unscriptural hypotheses of the Divine attributes and Divine truth.

The term *Apostle*, in the New Testament, bears a near resemblance to that of the *Angel* of the Covenant in the Old ; though the latter (the Angel) is much more exten-



sive, being applied to him who appeared frequently to the patriarchs and ancient fathers as the Transactor of all the concerns between God and them, and the great Agent in all the works of God; while this (the Apostle) peculiarly refers to him as the deputed Messenger of peace, truth, and salvation, in human nature.

The literal rendering of the Greek word (*αποστολος*) is, a *messenger*, or one deputed, or one *sent*, on a special errand, the exact import of the term (*מַלְאךְ*) translated *Angel* in the Old Testament. In the New Testament it is restricted to the first and highest servants and ministers of the Lord Jesus; those who were sent out by himself, with his authority, independent of all beside, to preach his Gospel, and to collect and establish his church. The office of an *apostle* was, therefore, the noblest office and charge which the Lord ever gave in his church. Three things were requisite to fit a person for it, or to entitle him to the character: *first*, it was necessary for him to have *seen the Lord personally*, and especially he must have seen him *alive after his death*, that he might be individually an eye-witness of his resurrection: *secondly*, to have *received his commission immediately from the Lord himself*, that he might teach his doctrine thus received, with an infallible evidence and certainty of its truth: *thirdly*, to be *endued with the Holy Spirit in an extraordinary degree*, such as with the gift of tongues, of miracles, and the discerning of spirits, &c., as a confirmation of the truth thus taught. Now, though these circumstances cannot apply to the Lord Jesus Christ himself in the same manner as to the Apostles, yet, as the *sent of God*, we shall find in his person and office a most beautiful parallel, which will fully justify the application of the title. He, as “*the Great Apostle of our profession*,” had alone “*seen the Father*,” and had received his commission, in his delegated office, from HIM: he alone, therefore, could teach with infallibility his will to man. The Holy Ghost, resting upon him *without measure*, bears infallible testimony to the truth of his mission and his doctrine by the most indubitable miracles

and signs, wrought by him, not in a corner, but before all the people. The consideration of each of these particulars will give us the most interesting idea of his person and of his true character, and convince us of the propriety and duty of submitting to his instructions without reserve, as the standard of unchanging and everlasting truth.

It was necessary that he who was constituted as an *apostle* should have *seen the Lord*, and especially *after his resurrection*, that he might be a faithful witness of his truth, and an eye-witness of the fact. Upon this circumstance the Apostle Paul frequently insists, for the proof of his apostleship. Hence arose the necessity of that wonderful and miraculous appearance of our Lord to him, without which he might have been an evangelist, but could not have been an apostle: "Last of all" (says he) "he was *seen of me* also, as of one born out of due time." (1 Cor. xv. 8.) In the filling up the place of the great traitor Judas, this also is mentioned as a pre-requisite to the choice, that the person proposed should have accompanied with them all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day when he was taken up from them, that he might be ordained as a witness of his resurrection. (Acts i. 21, 22.) Thus the Apostle John prepares the minds of those to whom he wrote, for the reception of his testimony, and that of his fellow Apostles, by asserting that what they declared unto them was "what they had heard, what they had seen with their eyes, what they had looked upon, and their hands had handled of the Word of Life." (1 John i. 1—3.) Such also is the appeal which is generally made for the confirmation of such an office: "Am not I an *apostle*? Am not I free? *Have I not seen Jesus Christ* our Lord?" (1 Cor. x. 1.) He, therefore, who is sent of God the Father, as the Great Apostle of our profession, the authorized, infallible Teacher of his church, must also be one "who hath seen the Father," that he may bear true testimony of his nature, of his truth, without the possibility of mistake or error. This can be no other



than a Divine Person, one with the Father. How the humble Jesus is qualified for this work, is amply testified of in his own declarations, and by his works. This is what he claimed, and to which his works afforded the most indubitable proof; and upon this the Apostles rest the certainty and dignity of his mission, his suitableness to discharge it, and his title to our implicit confidence and submission.

The Apostle John, who seems to have had particularly in view (from the circumstances of the church at that time) to maintain the Divine dignity of his Master, begins both his Gospel and Epistle with a similar declaration of his glories. Observe the opening of his Gospel: “He who was the *Word*, was in the beginning with God, and was God.” (John i. 1, &c.) His Epistle commences with nearly the same words: “That eternal life which was with the Father was manifested unto us.” (1 John i. 2.) And to mark the intimate union in the Divine essence, he describes him as being, even then while upon earth, “in the bosom of the Father” (ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον). The Baptist bears his testimony to the same fact, as insuring the infallibility of him who was come as the great Teacher: “He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven is above all, and what he hath *seen* and *heard* that he testifieth,” &c. (John iii. 31, 32.) Upon this circumstance, also, he rests his claim to the confidence of his disciples, that he “came forth from the Father.” “I speak that which I have seen with my Father.” (viii. 38.) “Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me: not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God; he hath seen the Father.” (vi. 45, 46.) Throughout the whole of his controversy with the Jews, as to his mission and doctrine, (recorded in John vii. and viii.), he principally insists upon his union with the Father; his proceeding from the Father; and the infallibility of that knowledge which he thus possessed of his person and his will. (Compare chap. vii. ver. 29, with chap. viii. ver. 14, 23, 28, 29, 42, 55.) What a glorious Teacher! We are sure that



he is the truth itself, who came to bear witness to the truth. We say, not with the subtilty and hypocrisy of the Pharisee, but with the simplicity of conviction, “ Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth.” “ The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.” Him we acknowledge, and him alone, as *Master*, whose words are truth unmixed with error; a Divine Guide, a Teacher of infallible authority, who demands and deserves our implicit confidence. No one else can venture, without blasphemy, to require the same. “ We call no man master upon earth; but one is our Master, even Christ.” He teaches what he doth know, and testifies what he hath seen with the Father. Let us, then, with obedient attention, “ consider this Apostle of our profession.”

As his apostles were *sent of him*, so he condescended also to be immediately *sent of God*, upon a work so important to man. Here we must observe, what it will be of consequence continually to retain in our remembrance, that, as the work of Christ was a voluntary undertaking, (and, indeed, the dignity and merit of it can alone rest upon this,) and as the act of *sending* was only according to the order and agreement of the everlasting covenant, so it cannot imply any essential, though it certainly does imply a mediatorial, inequality. “ He *took upon himself* the form of a servant,” in which he was capable of being sent; and thus submitted to receive the office, which, in the counsels of eternity, he voluntarily undertook to sustain. It is true, our Lord frequently insists upon this circumstance, in his conversation with the Jews, as the foundation of his claim, and lays the principal stress of his argument upon it. And the reason is evident; because in the humble appearance and state which he then sustained, the character and offices which he claimed depended upon the authority by which he was delegated. Hence, appearing as man, he asserted his authority to be from God; and, as Mediator, he appeals to that authority, received according to the en-

gagements of the everlasting covenant, wherein the distinct Persons of the eternal Jehovah covenanted, both for themselves and for each other, to concur with, and to support, each other, in the distinct offices of the work of redemption. “I am come (says he) in my Father’s name.” (John v. 43.) “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that *sent* me.” (vi. 38—40.) And when he had completed his appointed residence on earth, he returned unto him who sent him. (vii. 33.)

Upon this, also, the blessed Jesus grounds his *Divine Sonship*, in his animated appeal to the Jewish people: “Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?” (x. 36.) Yet at the very same time he asserts his union and equality with the Father; “I and my Father are one.” (ver. 30.) Thus, “though a man, making himself God,” as the Jews fully and justly perceived. (ver. 33.) Let those, then, who deny the union of the Divine and human nature in the one Person of Jesus Christ reconcile this claim in any other way if they possibly can. Our Lord never repelled nor denied the charge. Frequently he spake, by his own authority, in a style which was never imitated or assumed by any of his apostles, who wrought their miracles only in his name. But his “*Talitha cumi*,” “*Lazarus come forth*,” “*Father I will*,” is language which could alone suit him who possesses the dignity of a Divine Person. Yet, at the same time, he often appeals to his Father; and he once expressly tells us for what reason, that in this his humble character the Father might bear his testimony to him, to strengthen the faith of his people: “Father, I thank thee (says he) that thou hast heard me; and I know that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.” (John xi. 41, 42.)

This Divine appointment was the only proper ground on

which to rest, in his human nature, his claim before men as to the office which he assumed ; for, this being proved, it proved also his *Divine right* to whatever characters he professed to bear ; and which, if acknowledged, would have led the Jews to a confession of his Messiahship, and ultimately to the discovery of his Divine glories. What a wonderful and most encouraging view, also, hence arises to us of the concurrence of each of the Divine Persons in the undertaking and work of Christ, and the great mystery of redeeming love ! What a sure foundation is here laid of satisfaction and peace for every penitent and believing sinner ; who, in resting his hopes upon Christ, concurs with the eternal design of the Father, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit ! He sees the eternal Three standing engaged to perfect his salvation ; and the glory of the Godhead pledged to fulfil the promise, that “whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.” So far is this view, of his being sent of God, from derogating from the honour of the Lord Jesus, that it is necessary to confirm the offices he sustains in the eternal covenant, and in human nature ; and secures the hope, and greatly increases the consolation, of the believing mind.

Thus we see that whatever he taught, whatever he performed, in human nature, is stamped with a Divine authority. We behold him in all, *set forth of God* to us, for the acceptance and reliance of our faith. In all that he did and said, as man, on earth, he justly claims our attention, as speaking and acting according to the *will of him that sent him*.

Thus furnished and commissioned, his Apostles came *to introduce a new dispensation of grace*, and to bear the most important message to mankind. But in this they were but the servants of the *Great Apostle* of our profession, and acting under him who is Himself alone the *authoritative Teacher* of his church. Other teachers of every description, and however eminent, are but commissioned by him to repeat and to transmit his doctrines to



the different generations of mankind: and have no new doctrines of their own to teach; nor will they introduce any, unless they prove false to the trust committed to them. But he who was the first Preacher in the Christian dispensation, was its great Author. Its doctrines were first spoken by the Lord, and then confirmed unto us by them that heard him. (Heb. ii. 3, 4.) Its clearest light shone forth immediately from him, and its truths flowed in their utmost purity from his lips. His Apostles were the more immediately commissioned teachers of his church; and as far as they acted in their office, they acted under the immediate inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit, conveying to their minds the knowledge of truth, and preserving them from all mistake and error; so that in whatever they taught or wrote for the benefit of the church, they are to be received as the infallible witnesses of the truth. Whatever ideas we may entertain of the peculiar nature of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old or New Testament, such a superintendence must be absolutely necessary as should secure the writers from all mixture of error. This alone could fix our confidence in them; for, if it were otherwise, who afterwards would be able to distinguish and to separate the discordant parts? We should have been involved in greater perplexity from the equivocal nature of the Divine records themselves, rather than fixed upon the rock of unchangeable veracity. So that if the whole which now comes to us as from their authority, is not to be received as authentic and inspired, upon whose direction and guidance shall we now make the distinction? and where shall we end in separating the suspicious parts, the precious from the vile? Human reason and imagination will at last be our only resort, and the word of infallible truth be received or rejected at the caprice of fallible man. And if we admit the different objections which the corrupt prejudices or the vain imaginations of men will choose to make, we shall soon be left without any part at all to believe. Our Lord, therefore, has fully sanctioned the teaching of the Apostles, in all

which they declared from him, and in all the doctrines and precepts which they authoritatively lay down, when he declares that the Spirit which he promised to them should “teach them all things”—“bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them,”—and that he should “guide them into all truth.” (John xvi. 13.) “Whatever, therefore, they should bind on earth, he would bind in heaven.” (John xiv. 26.) And as he unites their claim upon the credit of mankind, with his own, he will vindicate them with himself, and consider the attention which they or their words meet with, as given to him. “He that heareth you (says he), heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me,” &c. (Luke x. 16; Matt. x. 40.)

It is, no doubt, upon this authority that the Apostle John has observed, “He that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us: hereby know we the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” (1 John iv. 6.) And another Apostle commands, “If any man obey not our word by this Epistle, note that man, and have no company with him.” (2 Thess. iii. 14.) Let those who venture to reject those parts of the Apostolic writings which do not agree with their own imaginations, well consider the danger to which they subject themselves, and the authority which they thus despise. But as they which despise and reject the message of his Apostles, despise and reject his; and they who reject his message reject himself; so also they who despise and reject him, despise and reject the “Father *which sent him.*” For while he confirms the authority of his Apostles in their message, the Father also confirms his.

To establish the certainty, and to discover to us the glory, of the Gospel dispensation, the Apostle introduces his Epistle to the Hebrews with this very consideration, and argues upon it through the whole: that “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days

spoken unto us by his Son ;” “ the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,” &c. (Heb. i. 1—3.) He was the first Preacher of his own truth ; “ God also bearing him witness,” &c. This truth, in the first declaration of the Gospel to the heathen by the Apostle Peter, is called “ the word which *God sent* to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ.” (Acts x. 36.) This, then, is our great, our Divine, Teacher ; and in this character, as the *Apostle* of our profession, we see the Lord Jesus Christ,—who was from eternity in the bosom of the Father, One in the Divine nature,—who was “ with God, and was God,”—coming to declare the things which he alone could have seen and known of the Divine *nature* and *will* ; commissioned in his mediatorial office, and sent by the Father as the Messenger of his own Gospel of grace, peace, and salvation to ruined sinners. When considering, therefore, the nature of his Gospel, that new dispensation of grace to man, the nature and extent of that most important message which it brings, we rest satisfied of its infallible truth ; since it is so confirmed and witnessed. If it come to us through the medium of his apostles, yet they spake not by their own authority, but by his ; and he himself, as man, by the authority of the Father. His church, therefore, rests upon the “ foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.” (Eph. ii. 20.) And the great learning of the believer is, to learn Christ, hearing him, and being “ taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus.” (Eph. iv. 20, 21.) It is from his own authority that we learn his person, his office, his work, and his blessings. There is not a doctrine concerning these, but he himself has plainly declared, and afterwards more fully explained and confirmed by his Spirit in his apostles. When, therefore, we acknowledge him as a *Teacher sent from God*, we must necessarily acknowledge all that he has taught of himself as the truth of God, or we so far deny the validity of his mission. In entering, therefore, upon his public



ministry, we hear him appropriating to himself that most beautiful declaration of the prophet: "The SPIRIT of JEHOVAH ADONAI is upon ME, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor," &c. (Isa. lxi. 1; Luke iv. 18, &c.)

If, then, as a Divine *Teacher*, he has expounded to us the nature of his other offices in the work of redemption, we must implicitly receive his instructions: we must be careful not to set up one office of the Redeemer against another; nor, when putting honour upon him as a Teacher, deny him the glory of those other offices, which in his own teaching he appropriates to himself. He is, indeed, the first and great Teacher of his church; but it is evident from that teaching itself, that this is not the whole of his character. This we must believe, if we believe his own testimony, or his doctrine, at all. He is as truly the Author and Procurer of those blessings which he reveals to us, as the Revealer of them. If "life and immortality are brought to light in his Gospel," *that "life is in Him."* It is "the Gift of God through Jesus Christ:" the effect of his dying love. (John x. 10.) He who proclaims the design and fulness of Divine mercy, proclaims himself also as the cause of that mercy, the channel wherein it flows, by his giving "his life a ransom for many," and by finishing that ransom upon the cross. If we hear his testimony of himself, he will inform us, that he came "to seek and to *save* those which were lost:"—that he came to open the way to God, and to be himself "*the way, the truth, and the life:*" that the pardon and life of a sinner is "*through his blood:*" and that, therefore, "*He giveth his life FOR the sheep:*" that "the Father loveth him, because he *layeth down his life for them:*" and as his life was in his own power, so *he laid it down of himself*; for "he had power to lay it down, and power to take it again." (John x. 11, 17, 18.) He tells us, also, that all men are, by the decree of God, to honour the Son even as they honour the Father; so that Divine worship belongs to him (John v. 23): that it is the office and work of the SPIRIT

to lead to him, and to his righteousness, as the hope of salvation (ch. xvi. 10): that his death was the complete conquest over the power of death, “swallowing up death in victory,” and in which the prince of this world was judged and cast out (ver. 11): that at his cross he bare our sins, the chastisement of our peace; there obeying and satisfying the Law, that he might become the Author of eternal salvation to his people: that he is consequently exalted to his throne with “all power in heaven and in earth to give eternal life to as many as were given him” (John xvii. 2): that the knowledge of this is by the teaching of his SPIRIT, whose influence alone can regenerate the heart, and restore it to the Divine image (John iii. 3, and vi. 44). Upon the ground of this his dying love, and the power which he has consequently received, sinners are invited to come to him (Matt. xi. 27, 28); and the promise of salvation and eternal life is connected with believing on his name (John iii. 36; and vii. 37, 38). And because all our blessings are derived from him, and his dying upon the cross, he represents himself and his *flesh* as the *bread* of God,—the bread of life, which faith receives and eats, for the purposes of the spiritual life; and his *blood* as the very *drink* of his people, without receiving of which there is no life in them. (John vii. 47—55.)

In these views are included all the fundamental doctrines of prophets and apostles, which lay the foundation of a sinner’s hope and a believer’s confidence. What messenger is like this? How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that thus bringeth good tidings! What message like this to the trembling guilty sinner! We only repeat the same, grounded on his authority. Thus “we preach Christ, warning every man, and teaching every man.” All else is beside our office. Every view and every doctrine unconnected with him is unsuitable to the state of sinners. Now that he is absent, his ministers are his ambassadors, by repeating the same gracious declarations which flowed from his lips, to “beseech sinners in his

stead to be reconciled to God." (2 Cor. v. 20.) Now we proclaim, that *in him* the work of redemption is complete; that *every sinner*, by his invitation and promise, has a *warrant* to come to him for all its blessings, and that "him that cometh, he will in no wise cast out." All the causes of enmity are now removed, which stood between God and us. In Christ Jesus is all-sufficient grace for the pardon of all our sins, the justification of our persons, the regeneration of our natures, the sanctification of our hearts, and our preservation to glory. "Jesus *has* delivered us from the wrath to come:" and "he that believeth shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life." Our great *Apostle* has himself taught us these animating truths: his Apostles declared the same by an immediate authority from him; and we repeat the same, as through them, and as explained and illustrated by them.

The Apostles, being men under a peculiar influence of the Spirit of God, confirmed their doctrine by gifts and miraculous powers; and many of them sealed it by their death; in which they were but the followers of their Divine Master. Upon him, the *Anointed Messiah*, the Giver of all grace to his people, that Divine Spirit rested without measure. (John iii. 34.) What they did in his name, he himself performed in his own name, and in his Father's name.—A miracle is a *fact*, in which the power of God is exerted contrary to the established order and acting of nature, bearing a Divine testimony to the truth of that, for the confirmation of which it is wrought. To his miracles, thus wrought, Jesus himself appeals, in the days of his humanity, for the authority of his mission and doctrine. And when he healed the sick, cast out the unclean spirits with a word, commanded the elements into obedience, and raised the dead from the grave, what further testimony could be required of his Divine commission? His sufferings and death confirmed his truth, though these had indeed a much higher design; for, what none other did or could do, when he had died for our sins, by the power of his resurrection he completed the evidence of his cha-



racter and office, and established, of course, every claim which he had made. Still he maintains a standing miracle in his church, when by his Divine Spirit he reaches the heart of sinners, and makes his teaching effectual, performing again these miracles of grace, upon the soul blind and ignorant, or dead in trespasses and sins, to which Divine light and life are communicated. Then he who moved upon the face of the chaotic waters, to produce life and order; he “who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into the heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor. iv. 6. Compare Eph. i. 17—25.) Here, then, we must admire the dignity and authority of the Messenger; the suitableness and sweetness of the message; and, when it sinks into our hearts by his effectual grace, his words will drop as the honeycomb, and we shall admire and adore the love and grace of him who is the grand and gracious revealer, and the procuring meritorious cause, of all our blessings!

How wondrous the Person who is the great Teacher of the Christian church! No less than the Son of God—equal with the Father—one with the Father—but who in his infinite compassion took upon himself a human body, in which he might appear and sojourn among us. In this, as man, he is commissioned by his *Father's* authority, and endowed with the fulness of the *Spirit*. Hence he derives an authority which it is infinitely dangerous to neglect. Let the proud reasoner of this world trifle with his character, deny his Divine glories, and refuse to believe his word: let sinners prefer their lusts to the blessings of his salvation; but, “holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, *consider* this Apostle of your profession.” This heavenly calling is, indeed, his own effectual influence and teaching by his Spirit; and, you who have experienced it, consider to whom you are indebted; consider the dignity of his character, and pay a serious attention to his message. His truth shines upon a benighted world with healing rays: the doctrines of his grace break like the

beams of light through the thick darkness of nature, to dissipate our sin, our guilt, and fears: his precepts will guide our feet into the way of peace. Look where we will besides, no satisfactory discoveries are made of our state; no suitable remedy is presented to us; no sure foundation is laid for our eternal hopes; no light of consolation shines around us, in the blessings of mercy, and the glories of salvation.

But while we admire the dignity and grace of our Divine Teacher, his own instruction teaches us how infinitely indebted we are to him as the *Saviour*, the Author of the salvation which he proclaims. Now, if we believe the record of the Son of God, we discover the guilt and wretchedness in which we are involved. But behold! the darkness gives way; our fears are all dissipated; our hopes of salvation are all sure, in the all-sufficiency of the Saviour's grace and truth. There cannot be a message more suited to the state of man, more welcome to the convinced and enlightened sinner. It is truly "good tidings of great joy to all people." It lays the foundation of comfort to the church: it speaks to the heart of the penitent, proclaiming his "warfare accomplished" in his Redeemer, and his "iniquity pardoned," through the acceptance of his sacrifice. (Isa. xl. 1.) It "binds up the broken hearted, and proclaims liberty to the captive," &c. (Isa. lxi. 1.) The ransom which the Redeemer paid was the most necessary for ruined perishing sinners; and as declared by himself, it exhibits its abundant grace to the guilty conscience, secures the most suitable and excellent blessings to the heart, renewed by his grace to receive them, and opens a way through time into eternity by the most glorious hopes and everlasting prospects. One word of Jesus, spoken to the heart by the sweet voice of his Spirit, is enough to convey the consolation and the power: "Son, daughter, be of good comfort: thy sins are forgiven thee," will yet give spiritual healing and joy. But this is the language which he is continually speaking in all the precious promises of his word. He repeatedly affirms, that



all the blessings of his salvation belong to every returning sinner : that faith may receive them, and rest with confidence upon him for the full enjoyment. This he declares, and this his faithful ministers repeat : but it is his office to teach effectually by his Spirit to the heart, to enable it to discern and believe ; and then most powerful are its effects, abundant is the consolation, and great must be his glory.

While the doctrines of his Gospel thus afford the most delightful subjects of meditation to the enlightened mind, the precepts of his word are the rightful rule of conduct. They are the words of truth, and, though heaven and earth shall pass away, his words, either of doctrine or of precept, shall never pass away. Whatever be our state, by his word of truth we shall stand or fall in the great day of account. Important, then, is the consideration, whether his message has been so heard as to be received, and effectually influence our hearts. The teaching of an Apostle, unless received, believed, and obeyed, can effect no useful purpose. So this grace of God our Saviour may be, as to its outward dispensation, received in vain, and become the “ savour of death unto death,” instead of the “ savour of life unto life.” The teaching even of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, in the days of his flesh, was without effect upon the prejudiced and obstinate Jews. But when by his Spirit he teaches the heart, it can never be in vain : his doctrine then enlightens the understanding, enters the heart, convinces of its truth and glory, engages the affections, and is “ received not as the word of men, but as the word of God, effectually working in those who (thus) believe.” Such is the character which he himself gives of his own sheep :—“ they hear his voice, and they follow him.” This is the test of his effectual teaching. If we believe the declarations he has made as to our guilty and ruined state ; the love, the grace, the all-sufficiency of his redemption ; we shall with delight hear his will, and do it, and submit to the instructions of our great Apostle in all things, not only in the doctrines he has taught us, but in the precepts and duties which he has enjoined. We shall



obey his voice, by believing, by resting on, and trusting in, his truth, and by keeping his commandments. In all he is our wisdom, and it will be our practical wisdom to believe, submit, and obey. We shall always be the safest when asking counsel of him, the only Teacher, when following his direction, and when conforming ourselves in conduct and in practice to what he has taught. The more we *consider* HIM, the more we shall discover of his dignity and authority: the more we contemplate *his message*, the more we shall discover the excellency of his truth and of his will; and the more we are conformed to it, the more we shall enjoy its benefits, in our consciences and in our hearts. This is the argument of the Apostle in Heb iii., and iv. 1, 2. With such a Divine Teacher as our light and guide, we can never err, if with an humble teachable mind we submit to his direction in all things. Our only danger is in leaving his instructions for the fancies of our own minds, or the perverse ways of our own hearts.

Thy words, O thou Divine Teacher, are indeed “like apples of gold in pictures, or lattices, of silver:” “more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey or the honey-comb: by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward.” Oh, may thy enlightening Spirit lead me to consider thee, thou great Apostle of my profession, till I am brought to a living and lively faith in all thy truth, and a cheerful obedience to all thy directions! Then shall my soul rejoice in thee, while “the words of my lips, and the meditation of my heart shall be always acceptable to thee, and in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer.”

## ESSAY III.

## Quickening Spirit.

THIS part of the Redeemer's character especially belongs to him as "the *Second Man*, the *Second Adam*, the Lord from heaven." It was necessarily and more fully referred to in the consideration of that title, as it constitutes the especial pre-eminence of the Lord Jesus Christ, above the *first Adam* in his best estate. It must now engage our particular attention. They who *are quickened*, though once dead in trespasses and sins, never fail to attribute the change to the effectual operations of the power and grace of Christ. The life which has thus been received from him, they feel to be dependent upon him, and supported in its energies and exercises by his enlivening communications. Hence, from their own experience, they acknowledge and delight in him in this character; and, while living in dependence upon him, yield him the tribute of all the glory. The reflections, therefore, necessarily arising from this title, will be both pleasing and heart-searching.

O thou great Restorer of all heavenly and spiritual life, may the consideration prove to every reader that he is alive to God through thee; living *by, in, and upon*, thee; and be the mean of enlivening the exercises of the life which thou hast given, for thine own glory, and our profit and consolation! The *nature and exercises* of the life which he communicates, though here necessarily alluded to, will meet with a more ample discussion under some other titles of the Redeemer. We shall at present consider him more especially in the exercise of his office, as the *Restorer of a Divine life* to his people; including

the work itself which he performs, as a *Quickening Spirit*; and the means by which he accomplishes it.

It was sufficient for the *first Adam*, as the head of mankind, to have life given to him which might be transmitted, in the natural way which God had appointed, to all his descendants: he is therefore said to be made a *living soul*; that is, possessing a life which was given to him of God, but without the power of imparting that life in any other way to his children, than in the constituted order of nature. All mankind, thus proceeding from Adam, would have been like him, had he stood in his original uprightness: and, when fallen from that state, and having lost the Spirit of life, we are informed “he begat a son in his own likeness:” the likeness and image of his fallen nature. The Second Adam, therefore, as the great *Restorer*, finds his people in a situation which requires him to be of an higher order than the first; not only a *living soul*, but a *Quickening Spirit*: not only having life in himself, but having also the power of giving life to those who had lost it; the power of again communicating it, and thus raising the spiritually dead. This is the power which, he asserts, belongs to him; “He quickeneth whom he will:”—“The dead (in sin) hear the voice of the Son of God, and live,” &c. (John v. 21, 25, 26.)

The Scriptures consider the state of man as a fallen creature, as a state of death, *moral and spiritual*. This is, indeed, the consequence of the entrance of sin, which is, in fact, itself spiritual death, consisting in the want of that spirit of life whereby man originally lived before God. A sinner is *dead in law*; as the sentence of the law, which is death, justly lies upon him. He is *spiritually dead*; as resting in a state of alienation from God, averse from the things of God, and from the love of God, which is the life of the Spirit. And he is exposed to that *eternal death* which the law denounces, and which awaits those whose hearts are at enmity with God, and who have therefore no disposition suited to the enjoyment of his presence and service. All the ways in which a sinner is wandering from



God; his pleasures, his amusements, his earthly pursuits, as engaged in with a carnal mind, are but various roads of death, confirming spiritual death, and leading to eternal death. This is the state in which all, and *every one*, of the children of Adam are found. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And, therefore, by the Law, "every mouth must be stopped, and all the world stand guilty before God." This, though awful, is the real condition of man. Hence arises the necessity not only of the removal of the sentence of death, through the satisfactory atonement of the Redeemer, but of that change of heart which our Lord himself denominates a "*being born again*," and "without which *no man can see the kingdom of God*." This work no human power can perform, and yet it must be effected by him who undertakes the accomplishment of salvation for a lost and condemned sinner. Our Lord frequently asserts his ability to perform this: "As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." And though, in his Divine nature, his power and authority are essentially the same with the Father's, yet, as the Son of man, this is a communicated power; and "as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." (John v. 21, 26, 27.) In the language of figure he therefore compares himself to bread, the support of animal life, and, as such, he cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. (vi. 33.)

A real change, then, must pass upon the heart and nature of man, if ever he appear with glory in the presence of God. This change does pass upon all his people. The alone Author of this is the Lord the Saviour: he has all power, and he alone, to effect it. He is as much the Author of life, in the new creation, as in the first, when by the word of the Lord the heavens and the earth were formed. He effects it also by the same agents and the same means,—his Spirit, and his word of power. Nor do we derogate from the glory of the Holy Spirit in thus speaking, since, according to the order of the covenant, it is the office of the

Spirit to proceed from him, that he may work in the hearts of his people, and again form them for himself. This work is called in Scripture by various names, though much of a similar import; and all implying the exertion of a Divine power. It is a new creation\*; regeneration†; a new birth‡; a resurrection§; a quickening from death. In all these there must be the implantation of a new principle of life; that spiritual life which man had lost by the fall; whereby again he receives power suited to the enjoyment of God and spiritual things; and which, though at present feeble in its exercise, and impeded by the contrary principle of a corrupted heart and a corrupted world, shall ultimately rise above and beyond them all, into the complete enjoyment of God in glory. By this work a *new* nature is formed, which, though distinct from, is as real as, the *old* received by inheritance from the corrupt and degenerate stock of Adam. He who was *born in sin* is *born again* to God: he who was born of the flesh is born again of the Spirit: the children of wrath become the children of grace. This principle is communicated, not by natural descent, but by the regeneration of the Holy Ghost, the gift of the Redeemer to his people, who are thus “born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John i. 13.) And here, surely, no one can suppose this alludes only to baptism; that this is the necessary effect of the mere ceremony or external rite of baptismal washing: no,—it is the grace that is promised therein. Much less is the baptismal act to be considered as the thing itself: it is, indeed, the constant emblem in the church and before the world of its nature and its necessity; *i. e.* “of the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost:” it is the constant sign, and, to those who partake of it in faith, it is the seal, of the thing signified: it is the figure of that by which we are saved; “not the putting away of the filth

\* Gal. vi. 15; Eph. ii. 10; 2 Cor. v. 17. † Tit. iii. 5. ‡ John iii. 3.  
§ Eph. ii. 1, 5, 6. See, also, Rom. vi. 4.

of the flesh only, but the answer of a good conscience towards God." (1 Pet. iii. 21.)

The principle of spiritual life, thus implanted, will soon discover itself in the acts of spiritual life; of which, as faith, not sight, is the grand principle, so the conduct to which it leads must be directly opposite to the conduct of men, who are governed by the objects of sense around them. There will be a change of views, of motives, of affections, and of pursuits. The evidences of life, as to the natural world, appear in the discernment of things around us, and an appetite for them: having powers and faculties suited to, and ready to be exercised upon, these things; so that our fears, hopes, and prospects, are regulated by them. The same effects are produced towards the spiritual world where the spiritual life is communicated. There is a discernment of spiritual things in the understanding; of appetite for, and relish of, these things in the heart. These are the objects of enjoyment; the fears and hopes of the believer's mind are exercised concerning them, and the prospect of their complete enjoyment animates the renewed soul. Once he was dead, now he is alive, to these things; and, as faith is in exercise, all his powers are influenced in the pursuit. This is a life which the first Adam lost, but cannot restore. He brought sin and death upon his posterity, but can never quicken them: nor can any child of Adam, nor any power derived from the first Adam, ever perform the work. But blessed be the Divine Saviour who, *as the Quickening Spirit*, can effect this change; who with almighty creating power can regenerate the soul: this he is able to perform; this he hath performed upon the heart of all his believing people:—"You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." All his people are the living witnesses of his ability and of his grace. May the Lord make the writer and the reader decidedly so, by the discovery of those actings of life which alone can *spring from union with the life-giving Saviour!*

But though nothing but the exertion of almighty and



creating power is sufficient for this work, yet he who is the God of means is pleased to employ various means to effect his purposes and acts in this, according to his own sovereign pleasure. While all things are at his command, and under his control; while, in his infinite wisdom, he knows the natural dispositions he hath given, and the peculiar tendencies of each individual; he is, no doubt, able, out of the variety of means which he employs, to select those which are most suited to produce in every instance the effect which he designs. Hence he necessarily and effectually works the purposes of his own mind; not by natural force upon an unconscious subject, but by making his people willing in the day of his power: by “working in them to will,” and then working with them **WHEN THEY HAVE THAT GOOD WILL.** To effect this he may employ the means of harrowing up a convicted conscience; as when the affrighted gaoler cried out with trembling agitation, “What must I do to be saved?” (Acts xvi. 26): or, the gracious drawing of holy love upon a convicted spirit; as when the heart of Lydia was “opened to attend to the things which were spoken.” (Acts xvi. 14.) His means are as different as the tremendous earthquake of the Law, and the still small voice of the Gospel; as the terrors of Sinai, and the mercies of Mount Sion. We are too apt to wish and to expect that others should be led to God in the same way as ourselves; or as those whose characters and whose experience we respect and venerate. And from hence arises a great deal of misconception and mistake, and often of discouragement, to the feeble mind. But God has mercifully left these different accounts upon record, and many of a similar nature, to instruct us that the great point of our consideration and inquiry ought to be, whether we are actually brought to God by faith in Christ Jesus; and not, by what means, or in what manner, that change has been effected. The first is absolutely necessary to the Christian character, but the means and method are directed by the sovereign appointment of God; and these vary according to the natural temper, the pecu-

liar situation, the opportunity of clear instruction in the great mystery of the Gospel, and various other circumstances which the providence of God appoints and regulates, and through which the grace of God is manifested.

This providence, often, by very different methods, is made the mean of conveying his regenerating *grace*.—He who hath all things under him thus prepares the way for himself, his own way, into the heart. He disposes and arranges the events of life so as to influence the mind, soften prejudices, incline to attention, obviate doubts and difficulties, and dispose the understanding to admit the evidence and the power of truth. Thus, when we look back and survey the circumstances of his providential leadings, we are often compelled to admire that wisdom of design which we could not perceive at first. He led us when in a state of nature, though we knew it not, till he brought us under the means of grace, through which he conveyed its powerful efficacy to change and renew the heart. He leads us, though “blind, by ways which we know not, and in paths that we have not known; makes darkness light before us, and crooked things straight.” (Isa. xlii. 16.) Thus, sometimes, he melts the heart to repentance with his goodness and his bounty; and, at other times, brings to serious consideration and conviction by trials and afflictions. He breaks the regular order of our earthly enjoyments and possessions, that he may discover their insufficiency; and breaks our satisfaction in them that he may convince us of the necessity of a better portion and inheritance; leads us to the sinner’s only refuge under all his troubles; and brings us acquainted with him who is the fountain of true life, and the treasury of eternal blessings. It is good for me (says the Christian) to have been afflicted, for I have learnt thereby lessons of true instruction, and derived therefrom the heart-knowledge of those blessings which WILL NEVER FAIL ME.

But the general means whereby he conveys his quickening power are, His *Word* and *Ordinances*.—This, like the pool of Siloam to the blind man, and like the waters

of Bethesda to the lame, are the usual means of his healing power. These are the appointed and established means to which he has connected his promises: here, therefore, we may expect every blessing. It is the promise of his grace and presence in them, that renders them so important in the Christian practice, so useful in the Christian life, so delightful to the Christian's heart. When observed in faith; when through them we look to, and enjoy the power and influence of, the Lord; then Oh, how amiable are the tabernacles of the Lord! His house is the very gate of heaven; the believing mind longs to behold again and again that glory of the Lord which he has seen in his sanctuary, and to taste again those waters of life which hath there refreshed his soul, in this dry and barren land. His word, indeed, connected with his promises and his ordinances, is the especial mean he uses for the regeneration and conversion of his people. The truth therein is brought into the mind, and strikes and affects it as the truth of God in all its glory and solemnity, its excellency and importance. Its views impress the heart, it is received, not with that general assent which leaves the greater part of professors uninfluenced by its declaration; but it is fixed upon the conscience, and received, not as the word of man, but as the word and power of God. Now the change is effected from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God. "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and becomes a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. iv. 12.) The words of Jesus become "*spirit and life*" (John vi. 63), because attended with his spirit and life-giving power. The regenerating change in a sinner's heart is therefore generally attributed to this;—"being born again," says the Apostle Peter (1 Pet. i. 23), "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever:" and the Apostle James (Ja. i. 18),—"of his own will begat he us with the word of



truth." Oftentimes when the immediate cause of this change is not perceived, it may be traced to some truth of the word of God lodged upon the mind by early education, general instruction, or Christian conversation, which the Spirit of God hath brought back to the recollection in its substance, if not in words; and impressed with an effectual influence on the heart. What, indeed, the Lord himself can do or effect without his word or ordinances, we know not, nor should we indulge ourselves in useless speculation on such a subject; it ought to be sufficient for us to know that these are his own established means of conveying his power and blessings; and that, though he can work without means himself, yet he obliges us to the observance of them. These considerations should make us exceedingly thankful for the Gospel and Gospel ordinances, constantly attentive to reading his word, and waiting in his courts. "For faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" "for how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. x. 14, 17.) Without the use of his means we have no promise, and therefore can have no well-grounded expectation. In that believing use his promise insures his blessing. But then let it be remembered, whatever are the means employed, all the work itself is the work of the Spirit. Means can have no effect to change the heart: they are but a dead letter without him; it is his own power through them all that gives them their efficacy.

He is the Quickening Spirit, because, as Mediator, he has the spirit of life and grace to give for every purpose of REGENERATION, SANCTIFICATION, FRUITFULNESS, AND CONSOLATION. So in the original creation he spake, and it was done; but it was the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters which brought all things into life and order. Thus, in the new creation, it is the word of his power which giveth life; but it is by his Spirit that such power is created, and the whole system of the

new CREATION CARRIED FORWARD. When he came personally on the work of redemption, upon him the Spirit rested without measure. He was therefore by way of eminence denominated the Messiah, *ברוך*, the Anointed One, and he who has the power of the holy anointing. Upon him, as upon his representative, the High-Priest, the holy oil was poured, that it might run down to the skirts of his garments, the meanest of his people. (Psa. cxxxiii. 2.) Hence it was foretold, that upon him the Spirit of the Lord should rest as the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and of might (see Isa. xi. 1—3); and by this he is prepared for the execution of his office, and to proclaim to needy sinners the blessings of his salvation. (Isa. lxi. 1—3.) That which was his glory and strength, as man, in the fulfilment of his office, is the glory and strength of his people; the support of their life and joy.

This, therefore, constitutes the substance of the great promise of the Redeemer under the Gospel;—I will give you another Comforter: the Spirit of truth; he shall be in you, dwell with you, abide with you for ever; shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance. (John xiv. 16, 17, 26.) This is the promise not only to his disciples, but to all his people; which, indeed, is evidently implied in abiding with them always, to convince them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. To his energy the Apostle always attributes all that they had known or experienced of Divine things:—"God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit;"—"we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God;"—these things the Holy Ghost teacheth, neither can they be known but as they are spiritually discerned. (1 Cor. ii. 10—16.) And all the general effects of the Gospel are equally attributed to him. When it came effectually to the heart, it was in the demonstration of the Spirit and in power (1 Cor. ii. 4); not in word, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost. (1 Thess. i. 5.)

Herein is the glory and the security of the Gospel: it is

the dispensation of the Spirit; it is in the hands of Christ, under his direction who has the residue of the Spirit. Hence arise its power and its effects. And as he hath promised to be with his church by his Spirit, even to the end of the world, therefore it is, and will be, the power of God unto salvation, convincing the conscience, enlightening the mind, sanctifying the heart, and becoming the mean of regeneration and of life unto all his people. Personally united with him in his covenant purposes, in his own due time they are called by his Spirit. Thus partakers of a living faith, they are experimentally united unto him. The spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes them free from the law of sin and death. They are one spirit with him: they dwell in him, and he in them. So they live by his quickening energy. How else could this change be effected in the heart of stone, naturally dead to God? It is thus he performs his new-covenant promise. He takes away the heart of stone, and gives the heart of flesh, the new heart and the right spirit, to walk in his statutes, to keep his judgments, and do them. (Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.)

Hence we must clearly discern the reasonableness of our Lord's declaration, as well as the importance of the truth conveyed in it, that "except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" man being dead in sin, it is the work of the Saviour to quicken his spirit; this he has promised, this he performs: and it is highly important that it should be so. Under all the power of sin, and condemned by the holy Law to death, his atoning work alone renews the conscience indisposed to the things of God; his quickening grace alone restores the desire of their enjoyment. Hence, whether we discern it or not, the word of God declares its importance and absolute necessity; and "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." His people are all partakers of his spirit, and therefore of one spirit and temper with him; and "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Let, then, the inquiry be made with seriousness and sincerity, Am I quickened by the Spirit of Christ? Why should



Christ be a quickening Spirit but to perform this? He tells us, therefore, that the dead in sin shall hear his voice and live.

Christianity, then, is not a profession of the truth of Christ, but the being a partaker of the spirit and grace of Christ; a new nature from Christ, by his Spirit conforming me to his life and temper; an inward heart-reality of life. Is it so with me? then I shall discover it in the exercises of spiritual life in the closet and in the family; in my temper and conduct; in the manner of pursuing my daily business; in all the objects of my pursuit, and especially in the disposition in which I am pursuing them.—Faith, not sense, will be the principle of my life; and my heart, my treasure, my inheritance will be above. I shall live by faith till I live in glory. Conformed to the design of his life and death, I shall love his word and will; be grieved that in the exercise of the spiritual life I am not more like him; lament its languor or decay; pressing after grace and growing conformity; encouraged with the holy confidence that hereafter the life of grace shall be consummated, and all its powers perfected, in glory.

What a difference here from the mere profession of the Christian name! Oh, may I be a true Christian, a partaker of the quickening Spirit of my Lord, and united to him! The life, the quickening, the all of true believers is derived from him. They know and feel it by the teaching of that Spirit which communicates it. Here, then, is their dependence; here they are looking for the supply of life and vigour, and hence they are daily receiving them by faith. Hence they find that “God hath given us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son;” and that “he that hath the Son of God hath life.” The life which he gives is eternal life! by his influence it is carried forward; and, as its source is inexhaustible, its supplies are unfailing, and its continuance everlasting. (John x. 28; xiv. 14.) They give him then all the glory, while, with the Apostle, they acknowledge, that if they live, it is by “Christ living in them; and the life they live in the flesh, they live by the

faith of the Son of God." (Gal. ii. 20.) What a fulness of glory and of salvation is there for me in the Lord Jesus Christ, which he has promised to communicate! Such a Saviour is the Saviour I need. What grace is due to him! what confidence may I not place upon him! If by his grace and power he hath quickened my soul to spiritual life, he will complete his work. In the work of redemption he hath completely removed the sentence of death; in regeneration he hath removed the power of death; in sanctification, preservation, and eternal salvation, he will finally remove all its consequences. Though I feel the remains of sin, and daily groan under its oppression, yet his truth and grace secure that it shall not have the dominion. This is the encouragement to my prayer in the spiritual conflict: this the sure ground of my dependence and hope; this the security of my supply for strength and for victory; this may well animate me in the fight of faith, as it opens the glorious prospect of a termination in my favour: of my being more than a conqueror through him who hath loved me.

But if not satisfied that I am as yet a partaker of this Spirit, or that I have not as yet experienced this work, what then will be my duty? No doubt the use of the means which he hath appointed, and in which he hath promised to bestow his power and blessing. Remember he hath promised his Holy Spirit to them that ask it. And if we ask it in his own appointed way, our expectation cannot be disappointed. But, if he hath convinced of sin, this is his work begun; and by the same means by which he hath testified of your need, and the suitability of his salvation, he can and will carry on and complete it. Use these means, always remembering they are but means, without power or energy, but as he supplies them; yet, as they are his appointment, they have his promise. There his people have constantly found him; there you may expect him in the confidence of faith. Read his word; pray and meditate over it; be found waiting at his gates, and listening to his truth. (See Prov. viii. 34, 35.) Thus

waiting at Bethesda's pool, the Lord Jesus Christ will assuredly pass by, and do all things for you that you need. There he that asks thee, "Wilt thou be made whole?" will not deny the energy which alone is able to effect it. There, believer, see the mean of your continuance and increase in the spiritual life. In the use of the means live by faith, faith upon Christ Jesus. Once I was a sinner, dead in trespasses and sins; his power was to me the power of life: he preserves that life, for he is able, that it may (according to his promise) be life eternal. Without the means of his appointment its energies will subside, its consolation fail. Here I must expect his power and grace, and the diligent soul shall be made fat. Let me, then, give diligence to make my calling and election sure. Let me give all diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. But in him is the source of all: I will, therefore, look through all to him; I will expect spiritual supply only from him; I will trust his word and promise, so shall I receive more daily out of HIS FULNESS. Thus, while I honour (in faith) this life-giving Saviour, he who has quickened by his grace, will preserve and complete his work. This Quickening Spirit shall raise me up *at the last day* from the sleep of death; and thus, when he who is my life shall *appear, I shall appear with him in glory.*



## ESSAY IV.

**Husband.**

AMIDST the various relations by which the Scripture represents the love of Christ; there is not one so near and so expressive as this: it brings to the mind an idea of the most intimate union, and the sweetest communion, of rights, privileges, and enjoyments. The frequency of the allusion seems intended to raise our thoughts of his love and grace to the highest pitch, to familiarize the mind to the highest expectations, and to introduce into the soul an *holy freedom of faith and prayer*.

A parent is one of the closest and most affectionate bonds which exists upon earth, but the conjugal tie is declared to be still closer: "They two shall be one flesh;" and it is the command of God that "for this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined unto his wife." He, "therefore, that loveth his wife, loveth himself." The Apostle has beautifully applied this to Christ and his church (Eph. v. 32), and declares, that we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. "This," says he, "is a great mystery;" but it is a mysterious fact in the experience of believers. We can never do justice to this character by a comparison with any of the fallen sons of Adam. We must form an idea of one sustaining it, and fulfilling all its engagements, without the mixture of human imperfection; and transferring this to the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall then come nearer its design; but yet the infinite, wise, and loving Jesus will still rise infinitely beyond, in the amiable dignity, the constancy, and the benefits of his love. May his own Divine

Teacher and Comforter give us increasing views of the gracious promises and love of his heart in assuming and bearing such an endearing character; while *both the writer and the reader are enabled by faith* to say, In this character, He is mine!

The more than friendly intimacy which this title implies, lays the ground of the most encouraging expectations to the humble believer. The idea would be too familiarizing if we were not led to contemplate the most amazing condescension of God our Saviour. Those views, those relations, which are entirely unsuitable to the infinite and eternal Jehovah, as an absolute God, in the full radiance of all his perfections, are peculiarly suitable to the God-man, Immanuel, *God in our nature*. That he should bear that nature was absolutely necessary for his sustaining every character in the great work of salvation. To form his church into the Divine nature it was necessary that he should take upon himself the nature of his church, and thus he lays the ground of that eternal union by which his people hold communion with him in all the blessings of his mediatorial fulness. This is the great mystery of godliness; the wonder of redeeming love! We now see all our blessings flowing through him and from him; the forerunner of his people in their nature into the heavens, the Great Priest, the true Melchizedek, Jesus the Son of God; but sympathizing with all the infirmities of that nature in which he was tempted in all things like as we are, though without sin. (Heb. vi. 19, 20; and iv. 14, 15.) Having fixed his everlasting choice upon his people, and having known our nature for the very purpose of coming near to them, he solicits polluted sinners, in the tenderness of his compassion, to embrace his mercy, and leave all beside, to come into actual union with himself. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider; incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house:" the abasement of thy natural estate of sin and alienation; "so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord." (Psa. xlv. 10, 11.) Determined to bring them

into that union which he has purposed, his own power makes them willing in his own time of love; he draws them with loving-kindness, as the effect of his everlasting love, by his own gracious influences; and sweetly inclines and enables them to take him as their Lord, and to delight in that relation: in consequence of which they are represented as “a virgin adorned with tabrets, and going forth in the dances of them which make merry.” (Jer. xxxi. 3, 4.) He actually sustains the character in all its glories and its endearments to the returning believing sinner; and gives himself, with all his perfections and glories, to them, while they, inclined by grace, surrender up themselves in the cordiality of affection to the enjoyment of his love, and submission to his authority.

Under this interesting allegory the mutual affection of Christ and his church is strongly represented throughout the Song of Solomon, which, under the most endearing circumstances of conjugal affection, displays the sovereign, disinterested, and evident love of the Redeemer to an object unworthy in itself, but prepared and purchased by his own bounty; and the unceasing and ardent desires of the believing mind which hath once beheld his glory, and *tasted the sweetness of his love*. The prophet Isaiah has represented the love of the Redeemer to his church under the same interesting allusion: “Thy Maker is thy Husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name;” and the freedom and sovereignty of his grace, by the distressed, distracted, and forlorn situation in which he found her when he chose her for himself, to the closest affection of his heart: “For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit; and as a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.” (Isa. liv. 5, 6.) The sovereignty and absolute freeness of that love secures its continuance; if for a small moment a little wrath arise and hide the brightness of his face, it shall be balanced with great mercy and everlasting kindness; “for the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed,



saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." (ver. 7—10.) Happy those who are thus brought into union with himself! Humbled sinner, whatever be thy unworthiness, thou art encouraged to expect it. Weak believer, whatever be thy weakness, thou art assured of its enjoyment. And when he hath taken thee as his own, he will treat thee not according to thy wretchedness, but the dignity of his own character and the glory of his own name. And he who hateth putting away hath sworn that he will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee, but with that compassionate displeasure which shall promote thy spiritual and *eternal welfare*. Hast thou felt thy afflicted destitute state, and does thy heart with holy love cleave to the Lord? Dost thou welcome the proposals of his grace, and long for the honour and the enjoyment which such an union secures? Let faith receive him, and he is thine; the sacred pledge is in the act of faith irrevocably sealed by the promises of his word, securing to thee his love, his fulness, and his glory; and thou shalt not with trembling fear call him any more בַּאֲלִי, *Baali*, thy sovereign Ruler and Lord, but, satisfied of the affection of his heart, in the endearing appropriation of faith shalt say, *Ishi*, אִשִּׁי, MY HUSBAND. For he will betroth thee unto him for ever in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercy; he will even betroth thee unto him in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord. (Hosea ii. 16, 19, 20.) If we consider what peculiarly belongs to, and what are the essential properties of, this relation, we shall perceive what he is to his people however unworthy, and what he will be to thee. United to thee in the bonds of his own everlasting love, by the power of faith, and his own unfailing engagement, his covenant promises and oaths, he will interest himself in all thy concerns; and, since his glory is in this relation connected with thy felicity, faith may rest assured of the faithfulness of his heart towards thee, and the unchangeable displays of his power and grace on thy behalf.

The first essential property belonging to this relation is, (1.) LOVE. And here the love of the Lord Jesus to his church is proposed as the most perfect pattern and the most persuasive motive : “ Husbands, love your wives; as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it ” (Eph. v. 25) : it is represented by the strongest and most interesting allusion to prove that never love was like his. In the marriage state, though the reality of affection be not less, it is often different in its exercises afterward to what it was previous to the consummation of the union, when the fervour of animal passions subsides into the calmer tranquillity of constant and confirmed regard : but Jesus is called the Bridegroom of his church, the relation in which the ardour of affection is most eminently discovered ; and he unceasingly bears this character to denote, in conformity to our views and apprehensions, that the favour of his affection is unceasingly the same ; that it never abates in its reality nor its ardour. But what peculiarly commends his love is, the objects on which it fixes ; sinners in themselves polluted and defiled, unworthy of his regard, and made whatever they are beside by his own sovereign grace and purifying influence. Whatever they possess which is suited to his love is the gift of that love. Whatever he finds in them suited for him to delight in is his own ; and the grant of his own *loving-kindness to them*.

The original estate of the Israelitish church is but a true representation of the state of every believer, and the whole church of Christ. An infant cast out from the womb polluted and perishing ; without any to pity or to have compassion : purged by his own hand, anointed by his own grace, adorned with his own ornament of beauty, and made perfect in the comeliness which he hath put upon them. (Ezek. xvi.) What a wonder of Divine love ! Yet, who that has experienced his grace, but knows the description to be true ? Such is the character of the bride in that beautiful Eastern song ; black in her own eyes, but comely in the eyes of her beloved, from the greatness

and ardour of his love. Hence he is represented as entering into this covenant and engagement with polluted sinners,—“I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, and behold, thy time was the time of love; and I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.” The promises of returning mercy to his deserted church are clothed under the same beautiful allusion,—“Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.” (Isa. lxii. 3—5.)

He, then, who hath so loved his people in such a miserable and polluted state, how shall not his love be faithful and unchanging? what can prevent its continuance, that would not equally have prevented its first exercises? what can render them more undeserving than they were when he chose them to himself,—when he passed by them, and it was the time of love? “If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” His love possesses all the qualities that can render it desirable or profitable to his people, that is suited to such a relation in its utmost perfection and most cordial union. It is not a mere profession, but a love of *truth and sincerity*; not cold and indifferent, but *ardent and operative*: he loved the church and gave himself for it. It is the love of *benevolence* that ensures the greatest blessings to the object beloved: the love of *forbearance* and kindness, which generously overlooks the numberless failings of his people: the love of *tenderness* and sympathy, which pities and compassionates the infirmities and distresses of his church. It is the love of *wisdom*, that will never suffer its



forbearance and tenderness to be misplaced or betrayed into the excesses of folly and dangerous kindness; but unceasingly seeks the true welfare of its object. It is a love of *faithfulness* and of constancy, “which hateth putting away,” and which will correct to purify, but not punish to death; which may be hidden for a moment in greatest displeasure, but shall never be removed in hatred and indignation. In every other respect this love is without a parallel, while it is extended to the polluted and unworthy, while it finds them not, but makes them, lovely: it is from everlasting to everlasting, and, in its origin, its nature, its effects, and its extent, we may well apply to it the admiring language of the Apostle:—it is a breadth, a length, a depth, a height, which passeth knowledge. (Eph. iii. 18.) Though free in its communication, and sovereign in its exercises, yet it is so presented to our view in the word of God, and so graciously are sinners invited to come into this union with Jesus, that no one can doubt of his willingness to enter into that nearest and most ineffable relation, even to him who is most unworthy, where the heart is truly willing to submit to his authority and receive his blessings. The invitations are general to the marriage supper of the Lamb, because all things are now ready. He came himself upon the message of peace; he sends his servants to invite all the most sinful and unworthy. He promises his acceptance of all who come in entire submission to his righteousness and grace. And, when faith depending upon him takes him as such, he will acknowledge the relation, and receive the believing sinner into that everlasting covenant of mercy and loving-kindness which shall never be broken.

If by the sweet influences of his Spirit he secretly but powerfully opens the door of the heart, its renewed desires shall soon be satisfied with the enjoyment of himself. The present, though imperfect, manifestation of his love shall quicken the affection still more, and excite the ardour of increasing desire, till the soul arrives at the full sight and enjoyment of him who is the altogether Lovely—the

Beloved and the Friend of his church. (See Cant. v. 1—16.)  
The next duty of such a relation is,

(2.) CARE and ATTENTION.—The marriage union produces an union of interest: the cares, the concerns, the welfare of each become one and the same; and the husband, as the rightful protector of his wife, becomes engaged for the preservation of her purity in thought, word, or action, her character and honour, her interest and her happiness. Here the Lord Jesus infinitely outdoes all that man can do in his best estate: the love of his heart, the wisdom of his eye, the power of his arm, unite to defend and to bless his people. He condescends to consider all the INTERESTS OF HIS CHURCH AND PEOPLE AS HIS OWN. United to himself, he feels all their sorrows; their afflictions, their honour and dishonour, their distress or their benefits, ARE HIS OWN. What is done to them he considers as done to himself; “For as much as ye did it to one of the least of these, ye did it unto me”—“For as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.” This was the design of the original institution, that “they twain should be one flesh.” Hence he declares, “In all their afflictions he is afflicted, and the Angel of his Presence saves them.” Her purity is his continual care; he purifies his church to himself; when washed with his blood, and adorned with his righteousness, they are perfectly justified in the sight of God; no spot of sin or guilt remaining: their garments are made white in the blood of the Lamb, which cleanseth from all sin. And when he presents them as in himself, a holy God will not behold iniquity or guilt: “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus!”

Happy believer! he stands complete in Christ Jesus; white as the snow (Isa. i. 18), all fair, spotless, and undefiled. (Cant. iv. 7; vi. 9.) But his people shall be perfectly like himself; not only the guilt of sin and its defilement removed by the sovereign displays of grace, but, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, he secures their purification from the love and

power of sin. For this purpose his Spirit continues with them never to depart; and soon he will entirely deliver them from the very being of sin, with all its consequences, in the kingdom of his own glory. “When he hath cleansed it by the washing of water through the word, he will present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but it shall be holy and without blemish.” (Eph. v. 26, 27.) Then, even this vile body shall be made like unto his own glorious body, without any remains of its present debility or defilement; it shall become the suitable instrument of a pure and holy soul, in all its perfect and *glorified powers, throughout eternity*. Then the union with her Lord shall be consummated in the presence of adoring angels; never more to be interrupted with distress or displeasure *throughout eternity*. *Happy day!* Happy day to his people, when the cry goeth forth, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him: then may we be found amongst the wise virgins that stand ready for their Lord; that we may confidently and cheerfully say, **EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS.**

Oftentimes, even in the present world of darkness, iniquity, and confusion, he appears in his providence to vindicate the characters of his people, and wipe away the stain which the malice of their enemies endeavours to cast upon them. If they are enabled to place the cause in his hands when reproached and calumniated, his wisdom will find the means of clearing away every false imputation; “for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers:” but, if they suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are they; for it is better, if the will of God be so, that they suffer for well doing than for evil doing: for even hereunto are we called; for Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. (1 Pet. ii. 19–23; iii. 14–18.)



Thus his people have often lived down, and outlived, the most violent opposition of their enemies: the tale which malice has invented hath been convicted of falsehood: their light hath broke forth as the morning; their righteousness hath gone before them; and they who have despised them have been compelled to bow down with respect or veneration; while the providence of God hath clearly manifested their purity of principle, and the integrity of their heart and conduct. But, if now despised and evil spoken of, the great day of the manifestation of the righteous judgment of God shall vindicate all. Then will the Lord acknowledge the sincerity of their faith, the truth of their love, the universality of their obedience, notwithstanding unallowed imperfections, which the world delighted to carp at; and the assembled universe shall be compelled to acknowledge, that their faith was not a mere profession, but a reality, by the effects which it shall then appear were produced by it.

Another duty of such a relation is,

(3.) PROVISION; in which may be included both food and clothing.—If it be the master's duty to provide these for his family, how much more is it the husband's for one in so near and intimate an union? Oh, what a rich provision hath the Lord Jesus in this respect prepared for his church! The provisions of his love are compared to the dainties of a feast, a full and luxuriant board, with a ready welcome: and as his blessings neither satiate nor injure, the marriage feast of spiritual blessings is the feast of every day; always ready, always open to faith; and faith does actually receive and rejoice in its abundant provision. This is represented by many other beautiful allusions, which denote the riches and all-sufficiency of his blessings. The shepherd feeding his flock, making them to lie down in the Lord's green pastures, and leading them beside the still waters, affords a most suitable and striking emblem of the love and bounty of the Redeemer. As such the believing soul earnestly inquires in the language of affectionate desire,—“Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth,

where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon; for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions." (Cant. i. 7.) When compared to the citron tree, or the tree of life, the believing soul "sits under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet to the taste." (ii. 3.) When his blessings are compared to the produce of the field or garden, he comes to "gather his myrrh with his spice, to eat the honeycomb with honey, to drink his wine with his milk." (v. 1.) These are but faint emblems of that loving-kindness which is life, and better than life itself; for which the believer thirsts and longs in this dry and thirsty land (Psa. lxiii. 1—3); that great goodness which the Lord hath laid up for them that fear him, which he hath wrought for them that trust in him, &c. (Psa. xxxi. 19.) Oh, how excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! Thy people shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasure; for with thee is the fountain of life, and in thy *light shall we see light!*

The Apostle has taken a most extensive view of this subject in his Epistle to the Ephesians (ch. i. 3): "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with *all spiritual blessings* in heavenly places in Christ." What can they want more who are so nearly united to him who hath in himself all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge, with whom there are unsearchable riches, and in whom all fulness dwells; when all that is in heaven is for their enjoyment; when they have the promise of its communication to supply all their need, and satisfy all the powers of their soul? If his people are complete in him, his fulness must be theirs; and, if his fulness be theirs, they can need nothing beside, since Jesus is their *All and in all*. Therefore, "eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." They need clothing, and he hath provided for them a garment without seam; a righteousness infinitely beyond that which adorned our first parents in their paradisiacal innocence,

and the loss of which exposed them to nakedness and shame,—the righteousness of God, a garment most beautiful, graceful, and beneficial, an ornament of consummate glory; a sure protection from the wrath of God. Thus arrayed, “the king’s daughter is (not only) all glorious within, (but) her clothing is of wrought gold,” for purity and brightness: “she shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work;” she shall appear becoming her high dignity as the bride, the Lamb’s wife: “the virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto him; with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king’s palace.” (Psa. xlv. 13—15.) Well, then, may the church of believers, whose filthy garments are changed for the righteousness of the Redeemer (Zech. iii. 1—5), take up the language of the rejoicing Prophet,—“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garment of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.” (Isa. lxi. 10.) Soon, thus arrayed, shall the new Jerusalem appear prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, and be eternally the *joy and adoration of her beloved and loving Lord*. Oh, the wonders of redeeming grace!

Then, 1. He will communicate to her ALL HIS HONOURS.—This is the peculiar effect of such a connexion: however low the origin, or despised the situation, this is immediately forgotten; and every former mark of poverty or disorder is swallowed up in the new relation. Even a slave, by such an union, becomes free, and, by the established law of society, is entitled to all the dignities, honours, principles, and advantages of her husband. Thus, by union with himself, the Lord Jesus exalts his people from the debasement in which sin and guilt had involved them. “He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory.”



(1 Sam. ii. 8.) If Jesus be the Son of God, they are the daughters of the Lord Almighty. If he live, they shall live also; if he inherit the Father's love, "thou hast loved them (saith he) as thou hast loved me;" if he possess all spiritual blessings, they possess them in him: if he be in the eternal mansions, he will come and receive them to himself: if he reign upon the throne, on the right hand shall stand the queen in gold of Ophir: if he hath fellowship with the Father, they shall have fellowship in and with him. (1 John i. 3.) This is the subject of every prevalent intercession, that "they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Hence, "the glory which thou gavest me, (says the glorified Redeemer) I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." (John xvii. 21—23.) Wonderful union! and still more wonderful in its effects! The Lord bring us into this union by the grace of his Spirit in the exercise of faith, and ever keep our hearts *faithful to such a loving, such a bountiful Friend*.

Soon, 2. will he take his bride to his own home; from her own vile and polluted habitation to the place of his own glory in the heavens. He has his house below; his church, adorned with his grace, with all the principles of the family and household of faith. Here he brings all his redeemed by the power of his grace: here they hold communion with him, they enjoy his love and care, and feed upon the abundant provision that his table affords. How sweet the seasons, how rich in blessings, when the King sitteth at his table! When brought into his banqueting-house, his banner over them is love. But "we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!" His glorious house is beyond the skies, where his church triumphs above; finds their eternal *rest and dwelling*. If he be already in the possession, he assures us it is only to prepare it for them, and

to secure it to them; and he will come again to receive them to himself, that where he is, there they may be also.

As Mediator, he is interested in, and, as Mediator, he claims, this inheritance for his people. Upon the ground of the covenant-engagement, he has a right to demand the once forfeited, but now redeemed, inheritance; and therefore he petitions with the language of authoritative claim: "Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold (*i.e.* that they may enjoy) my glory which thou hast given me." (John xvii. 24.) Hence he is described, when his church is prepared for himself, as coming down to receive her from the glorious habitation, and welcoming her to that city where the glory of God resides and enlightens it, enriched with all the treasures, the glory, and honour of the nation, with the river and the tree of life, where there is no more curse, no night of sin, darkness, or desertion, where there is no need of the brightness of the sun, because the Lord God giveth them light, and reigns for ever and ever. (See Rev. chap. xxi. and xxii; compare Isa. lx. 19–22.)

This beautiful allegory falls, no doubt, infinitely short of the glorious original, but is adapted to our present ideas of excellency and glory: and while those allusions are used which are most calculated to raise the adoration of our bodily senses, and those things referred to which we are used here most to value and admire, we may be well assured that under them are signified all those blessings which may be considered as corresponding with them in the spiritual world, and are equally suited to the dignity, honour, and happiness of an immortal spirit.

But the marriage-union and obligation can only be properly dissolved by death. As this is the end of our existence upon earth, and our present mode of living, so all our earthly relations and obligations must there terminate. Here the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ raises ideas beyond every comparison; the eternity of his nature secures the eternity of all his *engagements*, and *the eternity of his covenant-love*. "I am Jehovah, I change not; therefore

ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore," says the rising Jesus. Where, then, can be the end of his love and care? His love shall never cease till the eternal God can die; till the everlasting Jehovah can cease to exist; till the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, be no more. Blessed security to those who are thus united with him as their Lord, who have taken him by faith in the glorious surrender of their souls as their Husband and their Friend! Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, bears the same character, feels the same love, and is able to manifest the same power for the benefit of all his people.

It is by this very allusion that the Apostle represents our deliverance from the Law, and our union with a better Lord: the wife which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband only as long as her husband liveth; but, if her husband be dead, she is free and loosed from the law of her husband. Hence, if the law be dead, under the power of which we were originally held, then are we dead to it; for the law can only have dominion over a man as long as it liveth, and we are dead to it by the body of Christ, which hath fully satisfied its demand upon the cross, and therefore freed us from the covenant-obligation and condemning power. This, by the death of Christ, is eternally put away, and, in this respect, the law may therefore properly be considered as dead. Upon this we are, in the faith of the Gospel, married unto another, even to him who is redeemed from the dead, a circumstance which the Apostle mentions to shew the consistency and eternity of this union, because he that is raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. He, therefore, is the eternal Lord and Husband of his people, by whom we bring forth fruit unto God, and serve in newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. (Rom. vii. 1—6.) Here, then, we stand upon a different ground before a holy God; not as united with the Law which brings us in guilty, and denounces the curse, but as united with Jesus who hath



fulfilled the law, and as entitled to all the dignity, honour, privileges, and blessings of such a high relation, secured by his everlasting love.

Happy believer! Glorious privileges! It is true the marriage-bond may be broken by unfaithfulness, and every departure of heart and affection from him is considered as an act of spiritual whoredom. But, blessed be his Name, he hateth putting away. While our carelessness and folly would daily break the bond, his covenant-love is unchanging. And while his grace keeps his people, brings them again to repentance, renews the actings of their faith, and restores their soul, it secures that we shall not finally depart from him, whose mercy and loving-kindness will never depart from us. (Jer. xxxii. 40, 41.) Hence that promise of sovereign grace to his backsliding Israel, deeply defiled with the guilt of her abominations, which secures her return to the unchangeableness of his love. "Thus saith the Lord God: I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant. Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant," &c. "I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." (Ezek. xvi. 59—63; compare Isa. liv. 8—10; Hosea ii. 14, and chap. xiv.)

How secure the felicity, the eternal glory, of his people! how wonderful the love which in eternity he fixed upon them when lost and guilty, polluted and perishing! He took them for his own, and purchased them, when condemned, with his blood. He calls them by his grace in the time of their espousal, gives them himself with all his blessings, and adorns them suitably to the dignity for which he hath appointed them! Now, united to him in a bond stronger than the marriage-bond, they rejoice to accept him by

faith, while, by his covenant, his promise, and his oath, he engages to be theirs for ever. If grieved with our unfaithfulness, he will rebuke and chasten, but still says in the unchangeable faithfulness of his heart, “Return, thou backsliding daughter,” &c. But, if he forgive, let us ever remember the coldness of our heart, our unbelief, and our unfaithfulness, with deep humiliation, that we may the more wonder at, and magnify, HIS UNCHANGING LOVE.

O believer, if thou wouldest be humble, remember not only the undeserved love of his heart, but the love of thine especially, the time of love, thy first love, to that precious Jesus, and the awful declension of thy unbelieving heart. May he not say to each of us, “I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love?” What delight in him; what zeal for his glory; what love to his ordinances; what desire for his presence and of returning seasons of delight and enjoyment, then animated thy breast! The remembrance, when compared perhaps with thy present state, is enough to humble thee in the dust; then by night upon thy bed thou soughtest him whom thy soul lovedst; inquiredst of the watchmen with ardour and perseverance, till thou didst find the object of thy desire. (Cant. iii. 1—5.) Now thy listless indolence can hear the sweet sounds of the Redeemer’s voice calling thee to open the doors of thy lukewarm heart, with all the coldness of indifference, urging the vain excuse of the sluggish mind,—“I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?” Oh, may his gracious hand again open thine affections, and stir up thy inquiring seeking soul. (Cant. v. 2—8.) Let these views magnify his love, and revive thy apprehensions, and shame thee into a *return of spiritual affection*.

Hast thou, my fellow-sinner, thus accepted the Lord Jesus Christ? Dost thou rejoice in this relation? He calls thee to himself from the dark and dangerous habitation where thou art resting by nature;—“Come with me, my spouse, from Lebanon; with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Her-

mon ; from the lion's dens ; and from the mountains of the leopards." Poor sinner, thou mayest take all his fulness. Adore and bless him for such benefits ; trust his faithfulness ; and place thy confidence in his love and care.

But remember, believer, thy relative obligations ; the due return of such amazing love. Shall he not possess thy love ? This is the least which thou canst give him. Shall not his love constrain thine ? Faith will teach thee the most high and respectful thoughts of his person, character, and grace. Like the adoring church, he will be to thee "altogether lovely : " or, tasting his blessings, his glory, and his love, like the Apostle, you will "account all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord."

Finally, thy obedience is his absolute due ; and who can deny him that tribute of regard which is due to the glory of his person, and the goodness of his grace, were his commands only absolute and sovereign ? But all his ways are mercy and truth ; all his commandments holy, just, and good. Love will teach us not only to submit to them, but to delight in them. It is his wisdom and love that guides him as the Lawgiver, as well as the Saviour, of his people. Let him, then, possess our sole affections, and our undivided faculties, as the chaste bride of such a loving and lovely Saviour. If our hearts are wandering after the world, or the corrupt appetites of sense, we are doing all that in us lies to break that spiritual union which exists between him and us ; and certainly it would, if it were not for his sovereign grace in maintaining his own love unchangeable, and preserving ours from decay. Art thou mine, O blessed Jesus ! Then let my heart be thine ; here would I give it up to thee : take it, and seal it, and keep it ; O keep it for ever. "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm." (Cant. viii. 6, 7.) Reign there alone, and let not a secret wish or desire escape, unthankful to thee, or contrary to thy government and glory. Oh, may I be kept faithful by grace, till by that grace I am brought to be ever with thee, and to enjoy thee



beyond, when thy church shall be presented as a chaste virgin to thyself, arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, equalling the righteousness of the saints, and enter thine eternal mansion of glory TO GO OUT NO MORE. Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!

## ESSAY V.

**Refiner—Purifier.**

SIN is the pollution of the soul: it is that corrupt principle that, entering in, defiled the pure creation of God; that drossy and earthly mixture which still injures and debases the gracious principles of the renewed heart. It is in itself "THAT ABOMINABLE THING WHICH" the Lord declares "HIS SOUL HATETH." An infectious and diseased leper could not be more loathsome with his boils to the pure Israelite; a den of unclean beasts, or a cage of unclean birds cannot be more unsightly and unwelcome to the most delicate feelings, or a sepulchre with its noisome odours cannot be more offensive to the most refined smell, or with its putrifying carcasses to the most exact observing eye, than the heart defiled with sin in the eyes of *Infinite and Unchanging Purity*. The grand design and ultimate effect of redeeming love is, its complete purification: this must be effected before it can again dwell in his immediate presence; this the true believer desires may be effected; and to produce this is the great purpose of the word, the works, and all the gracious and providential ways and dispensations of the Lord; and especially of those trying, afflictive, and gloomy paths in which his people are led; and the end and object of which, through the remaining carnality of the mind, and the power of unbelief, they are often *unable now to perceive*. As this is part of the work of Christ as the Redeemer of his people, so it is one of those characters and offices under which he is represented in his word; that he may be a complete and all-sufficient Saviour; and hence we cannot too much magnify his per-

son and the sufficiency of his grace. They are therefore entirely mistaken, and very much misunderstand the nature of truth, who conceive that exalting the Saviour, discovering the fulness of his salvation, insisting upon the riches and all-sufficiency of his grace, attributing all the work of salvation to his power, and ascribing all the glory to him, will lead men to a licentious disregard of purity of heart and holiness of life. A partial view, indeed, of his character and design may produce such an effect; but when the whole of his offices, undertaking, and work, is properly considered, the effect must be quite the reverse. As such, he is the ALL IN ALL to his people; “their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption:” they need no other, for they are complete in him. In EACH OF THESE RESPECTS having redeemed, but at the same time called and justified, he will sanctify and preserve them to his kingdom; and as he hath called them to, he will make them meet for, the inheritance. The process of the purification may be painful, but the end is desirable. The furnace may be warm, but the design is most important: his wisdom, power, and grace, shall accomplish this object of his love, and purify to himself his peculiar people, till they shine without a spot or stain, *like himself, in glory*. May every trial which the reader or the writer experiences forward this design, and it will be well! May they all promote this end, and terminate in this happy state! and the eternal glory must be given to that wisdom which directed them, that power that turned them into the means of blessings, that grace that sanctified them to purge away the dross and refine the gold.

In considering the Redeemer in the execution of this office, we must inquire how he performs it, and what is the object which he designs to effect. The purification of a sinner must be two-fold, according to the nature of the situation into which sin hath cast him. It relates either to the *conscience*, or to the *heart*; to justification, or the absolution of the person, and therefore the consciousness of guilt; to sanctification, or the purification of the heart from sin:



the one by the application of the Redeemer's blood, righteousness, and redemption; the other by the powerful efficacy of his Holy Spirit. The one of these is altogether connected with the other; and, as united in the plan of redeeming love, *is united in the experience of all his redeemed people.*

These are the two grand views and leading truths of the Gospel: the doctrines of a *free justification through the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ alone*, the free gift of God to his people, received only by faith into the heart of a sinner, and, which is connected with it,—*the work of his Spirit*, regenerating the soul by his own Divine influence alone, and carrying on the work of sanctification by his own grace,—are the standard articles of Christianity, and the bulwark of the Christian church. If we inquire, when the church has prospered, it will be found to have been only when these great truths were faithfully and strenuously maintained. If we consider when it hath declined, it will be found to be connected with the decline of these articles of faith; and never will any preaching be attended with that success, which the power of the Holy Ghost alone can give it, upon the hearts of men, in which these doctrines are either **BECLOUDED, SUPPRESSED, OR DENIED**. Very soon the most flourishing churches dwindle into formality, and become the mere outward image of Christianity, without the valuable principle of internal and spiritual life by the powerful influence of these truths in the hands of the Holy Spirit. The history of the church from its establishment to the present time, carefully considered, will indubitably confirm the **TRUTH OF THIS OBSERVATION\***.

(1.) *The justification of a sinner in the sight of God*, is one of the grand purposes of redemption, and one of the first steps in its application for his salvation.—It consists in removing that legal disability which the sinner is under as to the enjoyment of all Divine blessings, and that sentence of justice which has bound him over to misery

\* See Milner's Church History, vol. v. pp. 98, 541, &c. &c.

and death. This, if sin be considered as a debt, can be no otherwise effected than by a payment of the debt ; if as a crime, by a perfect satisfaction of the law which has been violated. If, then, such a plan be adjusted and entered into by the great Lawgiver, in which the appointment of a surety intervenes on the behalf of the offender, the consideration of his work will be the same in law as that of the offender ; and his perfect fulfilment of the terms stipulated will secure his deliverance. When, therefore, the debt was paid, and the atoning sacrifice rendered, by the great Surety of his people ; when the acceptance of this was publicly declared and acknowledged, the legal acquittal of his people was secured. He hath “ forgiven us all trespasses (saith the Apostle), blotting out the handwriting of ordinances which was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” Here the transaction was effected, the mystery of redeeming love completed, which was afterwards recognized in the resurrection, and fully acknowledged and publicly ratified in the ascension, of the Redeemer, on the behalf of his people, into the presence of his Father ; manifesting that he had obtained eternal redemption for them.

Thus the effects of his mediation were evident, and its blessings finally secured. The declarations of the Gospel are designed to exhibit these in all their glory : they tell us that “ the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin ;” that they who “ believe in him are justified from all things,” through the perfection of his righteousness. A holy God looks upon those who are washed with the one and cleansed with the other, as without sin ; because their iniquities are pardoned, their sins are covered, and to them the Lord will not impute iniquity. He will not behold iniquity in his people. All the exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel are designed to convey these truths to the heart of the believer, and do indeed lay the most ample and secure foundation for the confidence of faith. The knowledge of this by faith brought into the conscience produces peace

and a good conscience, *i. e.* perfectly cleansing from guilt. Hence the blood of Christ is called the blood of sprinkling; because as the blood of the animal slain in sacrifice was sprinkled upon the offerer, or upon whatever was to be affected by it, for purification (Exod. xxiv. 5—8), so the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, can effectually purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God. (Heb. ix. 13—22, &c.) Here the demands of the Law were satisfied: here righteousness and justice were fully honoured: here wrath was poured out to the uttermost; and every debt which the sinner owed fully paid, legally absolved, and its obligations for ever abrogated.

When, therefore, the penitent sinner at the Throne of Grace accepts in the exercise of faith, and pleads in his discharge, the work of Christ, in the eye of law and justice he stands acquitted; and no charge can be preferred against him. Yea, he stands not only acquitted, but righteous; since Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to him. He is therefore made the righteousness of God in him who, becoming sin for us, according to the determination of the strictest justice, as well as by an act of the most sovereign mercy, he is pardoned, justified, accepted, and enjoys the most complete purification from his own acknowledged guilt, in the acknowledged righteousness of his Surety. This is the first ground of peace to a guilty conscience. The believer, under a consciousness of daily defilement, continually needs the renewed application of this healing and purifying remedy; and the promises of God continually discover its fulness and freeness to the eye of faith. And the reason why so little peace is maintained in the mind of the believer arises from the weakness and blindness of his faith, which discerns not the nature of the Saviour's work, nor applies to the fulness and freedom of the Saviour's grace. Hence spring darkness, doubts, and fears, which distress and weaken the believer's mind. If properly understood, nothing could be wanting to secure the consolation of the returning and



fearful penitent, though justly condemned in himself, because there is no condemnation to *them which are in Christ Jesus*.

But it may be asked, Will not their view of the person and work of Christ lead to carelessness and sin? No, in no wise. It may, indeed, when it is entertained as a mere speculation in the heart of an unregenerate sinner; but, when the need of it hath been discovered by discerning the nature and guilt of sin, when the convinced sinner has been labouring after the attainment of a justifying righteousness, and finds the impossibility of attaining it by the works of the Law, the discovery of it as the free gift of God, as an act of his own grace, in the work of Christ, is the only view that can comfort his enlightened mind, and will, when received in faith, purify the heart in love. This is the ultimate object of redeeming love.

(2.) *The work* which the Redeemer now begins, and which he will consummate to his own glory, as the great *Purifier* of his people.—The Apostle evidently alludes to this when speaking of “the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;” the design of which is, that, being justified by his grace, we should, as being born into his family, be also made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Tit. iii. 4—7.) The preceding observations were necessary as being included in the title under consideration; but the present view is more essentially so, as belonging to the character of the Purifier, and peculiarly of the REFINER; the general representations of which are such as to lead our ideas to the ACTUAL REFINEMENT OF THE HEART. That this is the great object of all the counsels, purposes, and ways of God with respect to his people is evident. The manifestation of the Son of God was to “destroy the works of the devil.” (1 John. iii. 8.) The great design of his mission was, to “turn away every one of us from our iniquities.” (Acts iii. 26.) His people are planted both in the likeness of his death and resurrection, that the old man might be crucified, and the body of sin be destroyed, that henceforth they should not

serve sin (Rom. vi. 4—6): and hence “he that is born of God doth not commit,” *i. e.* doth not live under the dominion or in the practice of, “sin.” (1 John iii. 9.) But, before this can take place, a change must have been effected in the heart of the sinner, who, being naturally under sin, can practise nothing but sin; till Divine grace produce the opposite principle of a Divine, a spiritual, life. This is called by the terms, a new creation, a new birth, a resurrection, and is properly a communication of life from the dead; and, as it is the work of the Spirit of God, this Spirit is promised as the peculiar gift of the Redeemer from his throne. (John xiv. 16, 26; and xvi. 7.) As this is an inward work, its excellence can only be known by its effects: “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou *hearest the sound thereof*, (here is the effect evident,) but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” (John iii. 8.) But our Lord has told us its effects, that we might as easily discern the operations of the Spirit of God, as of its external emblems in nature; which are, to convince “*of sin*,” as it is in the sinner, in its defilement, guilt, and danger—“*of righteousness*,” as it exists in the Saviour, including the nature, fulness, and blessings of his work of redemption—“*of judgment*,” as it alludes to his having cast out, *i. e.* overcome and destroyed, every obstacle in the way of a sinner’s salvation, and every enemy of his people;—that, seeing it as God sees it, we may discern its pollution, be led into a total hatred of it; and, flying from its dominion, may earnestly desire, and pray and wrestle for, deliverance.

Here, then, we see what is the source of all evangelical, that is, of all true, holiness. As Christ Jesus is the Purifier, the believer’s union with Christ by his Spirit is the cause of regeneration, and therefore of sanctification and purification. All holiness without this is but a pretence, a flower of nature, however gaudy, without the principles of spiritual life, faith, and love; and nothing else in the sight of God, who searches the motive of the heart, but

dissembled sin. All the fruits of nature must be the fruits of a corrupted tree ; corrupted in their principal motives and ends. Upon this the declaration of our Lord is founded ;—“ Ye must be born again :” and again,—“ If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.” The want of this is the root of all false profession and apostacy : and though the world, through pride and self-sufficiency, and often under the appearance of religion, and as a plea of holiness, contend against it, because they have not experienced it, surely it is the true wisdom of reasonable men, when the word of God represents it as so absolutely necessary, for each to inquire what it is, and to seek the enjoyment of it, rather than dispute against the plain declaration of the Saviour, upon no better ground than he of old,—“ How can this thing be ?” The first effect, therefore, of regeneration is, the discovery of its necessity from a proper view of our natural estate. Its progress in perfection is, indeed, different in different subjects, but such a general view of it may doubtless be taken as shall guide the sincere inquiry of the convicted mind *to some satisfactory conclusion.*

When the Spirit of the Lord enlightens the mind, though oftentimes at first some outward sin be the ground of conviction, yet, gradually, and by a discovery of the holiness, extent, and spirituality of the law, the penitent sinner is led more to discern the evil as existing in his heart. Many efforts to purify the actions convince him at last that the fountain itself is corrupted : and that he needs the virtue of an atoning Sacrifice, and the influences of an almighty Spirit, to purify him from all his iniquities. Hence, therefore, he is by necessity led to cast himself upon the Saviour *for both.* All this internal working springs from a change of heart already begun, a purification from the love, the power, and the dominion of sin. Now, though sin is present there, it does not reign as it used. It is subdued and kept under, while the regenerate sinner longs for its complete destruction as his greatest happiness. The proud man is indeed made humble, the



worldly-minded is become spiritual, the neglecter of God is influenced by his love; the hater of his commands, formerly at enmity with his law, does indeed delight in the law of God after the inward man. The world cannot but see and wonder how the change has been effected. But the man is created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works. To this disposition his grace does actually form all his people; "transforming them in the renewing of their minds, that they may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Rom. xii. 2.) And it is the excellency of our great Refiner that he can purify the most vile; that none are beyond his means and his power; that he will thus purify all his people, *and complete their purification at last in glory.*

Those who have been the eminent monuments of the efficacy of his blood, have always displayed most evidently the influences of his sovereign grace, and have experienced as great a change in their hearts and tempers, *as in their state.* What a change! to behold a blood-thirsty Manasseh weeping before the Throne of Grace! a persecuting Saul changing the breath of blasphemy for the breath of prayer, and becoming a bold and intrepid servant of Jesus! a polluted Magdalen weeping for sin, humbly prostrate at the feet of the Saviour, all her affections purified and rendered gracious! To see Corinthian sinners washed, justified, and sanctified! Here there was a real purification; and such is the work of his grace upon all his people: while his Spirit dwelleth in them, they become one spirit with him. The profession of Christianity without this work upon the heart is but a vain thing. There true religion begins: originating in union with Christ by his Spirit, it is maintained and carried forward by constant communication from Christ, by the same Spirit, drawing the heart nearer to him in closer communion, *and nearer conformity to his image and his will.*

True religion, therefore, is a spiritual intercourse between Christ and the soul. Is this our case? Have we been led to him? Are we living upon him, and looking alone to

him for all that grace whereby we live to God? True; the work itself, though perfect in its nature, and in its measure is not yet perfect in its degree. The loving believer finds within him two contrary principles; and grace and nature are conflicting in the Christian warfare. From grace he longs to serve the Lord without imperfection, while nature and indwelling sin produce evil thoughts, contrary affections, and damp and abate the holy ardour. These things were not felt before; but now, delivered from the love, like the Apostle, he groans under the being and remains, of sin—that sin that dwelleth in him. Here, then, opens to our view the great work of our Purifier and Refiner: the work which he has engaged for, and which he will accomplish, and for which he has, and in which he employs, a variety of means and instruments.

Under the title of the *Quickening Spirit*, we have been led to meditate upon the influence of his Spirit and his ordinances; the grand Agent in every means, and his peculiarly appointed means (Eph. iv. 11—13), in carrying on this work;—we shall now more especially adhere to the idea of providences in the hand of Christ to effect this IMPORTANT PURPOSE. The consideration of this will enable us to account for many of the difficulties, disappointments, losses, and crosses which we are called to endure; many of the trials and temptations which assault us, and, indeed, the whole series of those distressing providences with which we are exercised through our Christian pilgrimage. We are attached to earth; and even after the power of the Spirit has created him anew in the regeneration of the heart, and notwithstanding his daily sanctifying influences upon the believer, this attachment reluctantly yields, and is often too evident in its effects. Even our best actions, when weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and examined in their principles, motives, and ends, will be found to savour of the same carnal and corrupted views. These lie lurking under the most specious appearances of spirituality, and at last form an impure mixture in our most holy services. How seldom are

our religious exercises undertaken with a simple view to the glory of God, with a single desire for communion with God in them, and with that unalloyed regard to his love, and that enjoyment of his blessings, which would denote *a mind truly spiritual!* Some selfish view unites, when we rise the highest; some carnal object or dependence is evidenced too plainly by our dissatisfaction and despondence, when deprived of some of those means or instruments in which we trusted; when we are destitute of that society which promoted our apparent spiritual ardour; or rather, excited our animal affections in the exercise. How little spirituality, how little energy, often remains *when we are alone with God!*

How different, then, must our services often appear to ourselves, and to Him who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins! How different do they often appear to ourselves, when deprived of those outward motives and incitements; in the seclusion of affliction, and in the solitary chamber of disease. Such scenes, therefore, must be useful to us, to shew us ourselves; and through such scenes, therefore, the great Purifier often leads his people, and gives them thereby such discoveries as *deeply humble and sanctify the soul*. This leads the believer into the spirit of the Psalmist: “It was good for me to be afflicted, that *I might learn thy statutes:*” “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word.” (Psa. cxix. 67—71.)

But, alas! this is not all: the believer, indulged with ease or prosperity, too often becomes attached to his earthly enjoyments: and, instead of enjoying God in them, and glorifying God by them, seeks in them his rest. Earthly affections begin to predominate, and spiritual affections must of course be languid and ineffectual, the carnal mind is more apparent than the spiritual mind. Earthly ease, the gratification of sense, the comfort, if not the luxuries, of life are preferred to the prosperity of the soul in communion and fellowship with God; and to those ordinances whereby this communion *is maintained or in-*



*creased.* And when this is the case, it is well if carnal enjoyments do not entirely lead the soul away for a time ; if carnal passions do not gain the ascendancy ; pride, ambition, covetousness, lust, and those train of fleshly lusts which characterize the carnal mind ; till little evidence of the reality of grace remains, and strong proofs of *its temporary suspension.*

These things ought not so to be : the children of the kingdom ought not to appear as the children of this world. But shall they always continue so ? Certainly not, if such are the people of God. He will purify them to himself from the world and carnal attachments. He has his various means of accomplishing it. He effects it by his Spirit in the use of the means ; and oftentimes, by his providential dispensations, prevents, as well as corrects, the effects of this corrupt propensity. And, therefore, “ many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all.” If we are amongst his people who are influenced by his grace, how often have we carnally prayed to be delivered from our corruptions and sins ; to have our unbelief removed, our faith strengthened, and our earthly attachments weakened ! These are the great objects of desire to the spiritual mind, little suspecting those means which are necessary to be employed in order to effect these purposes ; so that, when the Lord comes to answer prayer, the dispensations of his love are often mistaken for the expressions of his anger.

He comes to break the chain and bands of sin, and we reluctantly yield ; to shew the emptiness and vanity of the world and earthly possessions, by the loss, or temporary suspension, of their enjoyments, and we murmur. He comes to exercise and strengthen faith by the trial of faith, and it excites our doubts, suspicions, and alarm. We are ready to say, “ By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation ! ” (Psal. lxxv. 5.) But this is the Lord’s own peculiar work. “ The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold ; but the Lord trieth the hearts.” (Prov. xvii. 3.) The sinner may escape

in this world the rod of his corruptions, because reserved to the day of judgment to be punished ; but his people can in no wise escape, according to the striking declaration of the Psalmist (Psa. xi. 5), “ The Lord trieth the righteous ; but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth ;” and, therefore, suffers them to go unregarded, till “ He rain upon them snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest : this shall be the portion of their cup.” (ver. 6.)

Refining is always a fiery process, and is intended to be a searching one ; and is the more necessary, as the dross is more intermixed, or the gold more valuable : and the object is not its destruction, nor the loss even of a single particle, but its extrication from the impure mixture, and its refinement, that it may be more suited to the purposes for which *the owner hath designed it*. This affords a pleasing, though a serious, view of the trying dispensations of providence. Similar to this is the representation of the Apostle which he hath given us, that none of the people of God might be discouraged or dejected, whatever may be the trials or distresses in which they are involved : the motive of the Lord their God is, love ; his object, their purification for himself :—“ Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth : if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons,” &c. Earthly parents are often influenced by their own passions, and chasten for their own pleasure ; but He only for our profit, that we might be *partakers of his holiness*. This is the end he will cause them to answer ; for, though “ no chastening is for the present joyous, but grievous, nevertheless, afterwards, it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees :” neither despise the chastening of the Lord, as though it were a matter of course, a trivial concern, without viewing the hand of God in it, and attending to its design ; nor faint when thou art rebuked of him, as though his fatherly compassion was exhausted,

or his love was changed; for these are but the compassions of his wisdom and fatherly love, and will be found in the end the greatest of his blessings. (Heb. xii. 5—13.)

It does not become us to murmur at the way in which the Lord thinks good to answer our prayers, when he hath given us reason to expect that this must, and would, be the way in which he would purify his people to himself. The filth of the daughter of Sion must often be washed away, and the blood of Jerusalem purged from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning (Isa. iv. 4), before he that is left in Sion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy (ver. 3), and by his glory evidently appear as their defence (ver. 5.) His dark dispensations precede the brightness of his countenance, as the night precedes the day. Thus, when, in the Prophet Zechariah (chap. xiii. 9), the Lord describes the collecting of a chosen remnant to the Redeemer, “I will bring (says he) the third part through the fire; and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: then they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, **THE LORD IS MY GOD.**” This is represented as the peculiar character of the Redeemer, the great office of the Messenger of the Covenant, when coming to his temple; and closely intermixing itself with his work of salvation; “He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as *gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord a sacrifice in righteousness.*” (Mal. iii. 3.)

The idea is interesting and solemn; his people are his gold and silver, they are his כֶּסֶף, his “peculiar treasure;” he is anxious that they should appear as such; that they should shine to his glory; and therefore he determines to refine and purify them from earthly dross. He assumes, therefore, the office, and casts them into the furnace of trial; but he *sits by* observing the whole: he has well observed the need they stand in of the trying dispensation;



what peculiar trials are suited to their state; and what degrees they may be able to endure. He sees how they bear under it, the effects which it produces. He is intent upon and examining the process: it shall neither be too little nor too much; but, in time, in nature, and in measure, suited to answer the purpose of the great Redeemer in the purification and preservation of his people. So that every believer may be confident with holy Job, though he may not discern the work or design of the Lord, that “he knoweth the path which he takes, and when he hath tried him, he shall come forth as gold.” (Job xxiii. 10.) Where the Lord gives faith, he will try faith. Thus Abraham, the father of the faithful, had his faith confirmed by one trial after another; the last the severest; till God could say, “I know, Abraham, that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.” I have made that perfect trial which fully establishes thy character; *i. e.* not in his own view, for he well knew it before: but in the view of all who shall ever hear his dispensations, and his conduct under them. Witness, also, Daniel and the three worthies; with many other similar examples.

But afflictions and bodily distress are not the only means which the Lord uses for this purpose; nor are they those crosses and distressing dispensations in providence which most break our attachment to earth. The afflictions of the mind are oftentimes more distressing than all the sorrows which the loss of earthly enjoyments occasions. The inward exercises of the soul, its conflicts with corruption or the enemy are trials of the severest kind to *the renewed mind*; and, considered as the trials of faith, love, and obedience, they must be considered as part of the Lord’s dispensations in PURIFYING HIS PEOPLE TO HIMSELF. Though, as they draw forth our corruption, they are not of his working, *but our own sins*.

In the first sense, “happy is the man which endureth temptation: for, when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that

love him." And, in the other, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted," (i. e. drawn aside with evil), "neither tempteth he (or draweth aside) any man." (James i. 12—15.) But, while the believer is labouring in this furnace, the discovery of his own unsuspected iniquities often deeply humbles him; and the great design of the enemy is defeated by his own project. While the believer learns his frailty and corruption, he learns to beware; and, while he is deeply abased, he flies to the cleansing and purifying fountain; and, by his inward or external falls, he learns to hate his iniquities, and rises again to greater watchfulness, *and purity of heart and life*. These are often the ways of him who bringeth good out of evil; not to encourage sin, but display the power of his own arm, *the suitability and riches of his own grace*. He can never design to encourage sin, who, by all his dispensations, however mysterious, designs the purification from it. Nor can that man understand any of his ways, who can suppose that they are calculated in any degree to encourage a *worldly or carnal spirit*.

Here, then, may be ground of self-examination, by inquiring how our hearts are affected towards this character of Christ. His blood and righteousness perfectly purifies from guilt. *Oh, what a suitable Saviour to polluted sinners!* In him there is complete absolution from all guilt, and therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. But do we thank him equally for breaking the power, and purifying the heart from the defilement, of sin? Are we earnestly desiring of him to accomplish this more in us? and are we longing for the completion of it in his presence, where all his people shall be like him? Such was the language, and such was the desire of the Apostle. He was pressing on, that he might apprehend that for which also he was apprehended of Jesus Christ; if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. (Phil. iii. 11, 12.) Such is the language of his people. Is it ours? If the Lord does not purify us now, as amongst

his people, he will purify us from out of them. He will purge out from among them the rebellious (see Ezek. xx. 38), and, in the great day, he will purify the precious from among the vile; and then they “shall return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.” (Mal. iii. 18.) And the furnace which is beyond is not the furnace of trial and purification, but of everlasting destruction; not of purifying mercy and love, but of endless misery and infinite wrath!

Let, then, the believer be induced to look upon his present afflictions, of whatever kind, in a very different light from what unbelief would represent them. The Gospel opens a most encouraging view to the mind. Ye oppressed, ye afflicted, ye tried and tempted, tossed with tempests and not comforted, consider it well. Those things which so alarm your fears are the means the Lord is using to promote your best, because your spiritual and eternal, interest; that which you would prefer before all things, if you were but as wise as he. They flow from the abundance of his love, the unchangeableness of his purposes of grace; from that mercy which is from everlasting to everlasting, and which secures that all the ways of the Lord should be “mercy and truth to such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.” He is hewing the living stones of his church for the spiritual building, the temple on Mount Sion, that they may be prepared for the place designed for them there, before they are brought there, that there may be no more hewing there. He is cleansing his people from the pollution that is in the world, that he may fit them for the world of light and purity, and make them meet to be **PARTAKERS OF THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS IN LIGHT.** He is melting down the metal that he may purify it, that, divested of its dross, he may again cast it into his own mould, to restore that image which was defaced, or rather destroyed, that it may bear his Divine impression with perfect purity and glory throughout eternity. Not a grain shall be lost, though it pass through the



fiery trial: it shall be his eternal treasure. If in heaviness through manifold temptations, it is, that “the trial of faith being much more precious than of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found to praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet. i. 6, 7.)

The great object, therefore, which ought to engage our attention in all, is, that which we are always too apt to neglect, *the design of God*. The due consideration of this would tend to produce a spirit of humiliation under it, of resignation to his will, of faith and dependence, of holy confidence in future trial, while the trial of faith wrought patience, experience, and hope (Rom. v. 3, &c.), and of holy conformity to the image and will of God. These are tempers in which we should meet afflictions with profit, to the glory of God and our own edification and consolation. Thus they would all be found working together for good, and promote that grand end, which he will certainly accomplish towards all his people, *in the world to come*.

Then, having passed through the last great trial of faith, they shall leave all their sins and imperfections behind them, and, delivered from the being as well as from the power of their corruptions, they shall be for ever holy, unblameable, and unproveable in his sight. (Col. i. 22.) The God of all grace who hath called them to his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, *after they have suffered awhile* below, shall make them perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle them. (1 Pet. v. 10.) And he who hath loved them, and given himself for them, when he hath sanctified and cleansed them by the washing of water through the word, shall present them to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish. (Eph. v. 25—27.) Yea, this vile body shall experience the effect of the change, and be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself. (Phil. iii. 21.)

What a glorious perfection appears in the character of Christ! What a complete union between the plan of his

Gospel, and the designs of his providence; and how wonderful will they appear when all shall be completed! He is all I want for justification or for sanctification. So complete is the purchase of redemption, that he who believes is justified from all things. Soon shall its effects and its enjoyments be complete in the hearts of all his people. Sanctified by grace, they shall shine in glory. Oh, the virtue, the infinite virtue, of his redeeming blood and justifying righteousness! the power, the almighty power, of his regenerating grace! Soon shall it triumph in the actual salvation of all his redeemed people. This is the believer's earnest desire; and soon shall he bless God for fulfilling that desire which his own grace implanted. The Lord will perfect *that which concerns us*.

If this be the desire of thy heart, fear not, however vile and polluted, to come and put thyself under the hand of Christ for cleansing and purification. He is able to accomplish it. He is willing to bestow his blessings, and exert his power. He hath done it for thousands, and ten thousands; and hath never forsaken those who seek him. He hath promised, and his promise is immutable truth. Search me, then, O God, and try my heart; prove me, and examine my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. I know not what is the best way or the best means to produce this; may I therefore always be satisfied that the way and means thou choosest are the best! O happy spirits that surround thy throne! once in great tribulation, but now they are come out of it, because they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne, and serve him day and night without ceasing, and without sin. (Rev. vii. 15.)

And shall my dying corruptible body be thus purified? My polluted soul be thus refined, divested for ever of all sinful passions, corruptions, and infirmities? What a glorious Saviour, who can, who will, perform all this for me! Blessed Purifier, take me and purify me for thyself, till I shine with thee in glory. Let me never murmur at those

means thou art employing in this world ; never mistake their design, nor needlessly or unjustly accuse thee in any of thy merciful dispensations. But let these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Then, among the number of thy redeemed, I shall bless thee for each and for all ; and thine will be the eternal glory.



## ESSAY VI.

**Dew—Rain—Showers.**

THE church of Christ on earth is frequently compared to a field which the Lord hath planted ; to a vineyard which he hath enclosed ; to a garden which he cultivates ; the fruits of which are most pleasant and delightful to him. It is in one or the other of these views that the church is considered, when his influences are compared to the Dew, or to the Rain, or Showers, which are among the principal causes of fertility and beauty in nature.

Man in his natural estate is justly considered as to spiritual things as a barren wilderness or a dreary desert : his heart is, indeed, abundantly prolific ; but its fruits are, like the productions of the wilderness, wild and useless. The thorns and briars of vexation and trouble attend the luxuriant plants of sin and vanity ; but the miserable and squalid appearance of nature is not more changed by cultivation, than the wretched heart of man is changed by grace. The prophet has represented it under the beautiful image of the wilderness and solitary place exulting with joy, the desert blossoming as the rose ; changing its dreary aspect for the glory of Lebanon, covered with its lofty cedars ; or the fertile field of Carmel and Sharon adorned with abundance of corn, or beautified with innumerable flocks. (Isa. xxxv. 1, &c.) And He whose grace hath made the change is represented as attending to it with peculiar care, watching over it, and preserving it ;—“I the Lord do keep it : I will water it every moment lest any hurt it ; I will keep it night and day.” Then “He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root ; Israel shall

blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." (Isa. xxvii. 2, 3, 6.) Till cultivation has taken place, all the showers of heaven only increase the rankness of the weeds; or the luxuriance of the thorns. And all the blessings of Heaven upon an uncultivated heart, till grace has renewed its principles, and implanted the heavenly seed, will only enrich the evils, and give opportunity for displaying the earthly, carnal, and corrupted principles that abide there. But now both temporal and spiritual blessings become the means of increasing spiritual life, growth, beauty, and fruitfulness, to the glory of God our Saviour, and the happiness of his people.

For this purpose he becomes to his Israel as the dew, or as the rain, upon the grass; and Scripture borrows some of its most delightful images to represent his spiritual influences from this circumstance in the natural world.

We, indeed, in this cold northern climate, can form but little idea of the full beauty of the comparison, as we know but little, comparatively, of their influence. In the tropical regions, or those warmer climates that surround them, the rain generally falls regularly and periodically; and the dews, which fall in great abundance, are particularly useful in refreshing all nature, and are for a great part of the year the principal or only supply of vegetation.

It is to a circumstance of this kind that the Psalmist alludes in Psa. cxxxiii. 3. The dews collecting upon the lofty top of Mount Hermon, were from thence carried by a gentle air till they descended upon the lower and warmer hills of Mount Sion; and thus the Lord commanded his blessings to descend there, producing an abundant fruitfulness; the type of those spiritual blessings which flowed from thence to his people, even life for ever more.

What these are to vegetation, which would soon die without them, such is Christ to the believing soul, and to the progress of spiritual life: the same or correspondent effects are experienced in the moral and spiritual world from the influence of his grace, as in the world of nature from the copious dews or gentle rains: such he is found in

the delightful experience of the believer, when by faith he receives the abundant communication of his grace. Nothing can be more grateful, nothing more enlivening, after a long drought, in which the earth has as it were fainted and become languid by continual heat, than the effects of the gentle shower, or copious nightly mists falling around in a profusion of dew. The refreshing influence is not felt alone through the vegetable world, but affords a grateful refreshment to every sense: we see, we taste, we smell, we hear, we feel all around us the salutary influence, the delightful fragrance. It is in this view\* we shall particularly mark out the analogy between nature and grace in this particular, as to their great utility and important influence.

May that grace now descend from the fountain of supply! And, if its sweet consolations refresh and sanctify our hearts, we shall more fully understand the beauty of the allusion; and, while abounding in the fruits of peace and joy, of faith and hope, and of genuine holiness, his name will be precious; and we shall acknowledge and adore the Lord our Redeemer in the communication of his Spirit, as the Source and Author, and as the Preserver, of all our enjoyments of grace, and our hopes of glory.

Throughout the whole of this Essay it must be taken for granted that spiritual life has been communicated; that the sinner is quickened by Divine grace; and that he awaits the influence of that grace for its support and progress. And then it will be found,

(1.) That as the rain and dews alone prevent the *system*.

\* We might consider the nature and property of the dew, rain, &c. as it is the gift of God,—as it comes at his appointment, and by his sovereign pleasure,—as it tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men,—and other circumstances which relate to the essential glory, the sovereign appointment, or the inimitable excellency of the Redeemer; but these views will be interspersed, while the utility and beneficial effects of his influence will lead our hearts to adore and love him.—Compare the following passages of Scripture on the subject:

|      |   |                   |   |       |   |               |   |          |   |                  |
|------|---|-------------------|---|-------|---|---------------|---|----------|---|------------------|
| DEW. | { | Dent. xxxiii. 28. | { | RAIN. | { | Isa. xxx. 23. | { | SHOWERS. | { | Dent. xxxii. 2.  |
|      |   | Psa. cx. 3.       |   |       |   | Isa. lv. 10.  |   |          |   | Ezek. xxxiv. 26. |
|      |   | Prov. iii. 20.    |   |       |   | Heb. vi. 7.   |   |          |   |                  |
|      |   | Prov. xix. 12.    |   |       |   |               |   |          |   |                  |
|      |   | Isa. xviii. 4.    |   |       |   |               |   |          |   |                  |



of vegetation from being *parched and burnt up*, so the continued influence of grace alone prevents *the spiritual decline of the soul*, or even its return to that spiritual death from which it hath been removed by its sovereign influences.

In the time of drought every thing declines; the produce of nature drops and hangs its head; and, if it continue long, it dies and moulders into its dust. The parched and withering earth is said, therefore, to be thirsty, and to long for the refreshing shower, because of the reviving influence it immediately feels, and the grateful scene which immediately spreads over all the vegetable world; diffusing its joy around even to the animal creation. The goodness of God is therefore beautifully represented by the Psalmist by this circumstance;—"He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man; that he may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man; and oil to make his face to shine; and bread which strengtheneth man's heart." (Psa. civ. 13—15. Compare lxxv. 9—11.) Such is the influence of grace upon the spiritual life, which is as dependent upon God and the communication of the Spirit of Christ, as the natural life of every kind is dependent upon the influence of these. When the Lord hears (or rather, communicates his influence to) the heavens, they being acted upon become a blessing, and communicate their influence to the earth: the earth produces its corn and wine and oil; communicating its blessings around to its inhabitants. (Hos. ii. 21, 22.) We plough, we sow, we plant; this is our duty, without which we do not expect either fruitful fields or harvests; but still we know that there can be no fruitfulness without the influence of the heavens. The sun must shine, and the rains descend. The light and heat and air must unite with the fluid waters in their different appearances of rain and dews, or vegetation will cease; and, unless these unite in proper proportions, the progress of vegetation will be suspended, be weakened, or become irregular.

Here nature is strikingly adapted to teach us a spiritual lesson. In this spiritual life the use of means is equally our duty, while the progress of that life and its vigour depend equally on the influences of the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness and the Spirit of Grace. And the beauty and regularity of its exercises much depend upon consistent and proportionate views of the truths of God, of the person of Christ, the nature, the freeness, and fulness of his redemption, the person, work, and grace of the Spirit, and the simple but steadfast exercises of faith in these great doctrines and facts of Christianity, by which the sacred influences are communicated to the heart. No wonder, then, that the religion of many is without life in all its duties, or that it soon comes to nothing, when it is without Christ and his Spirit, nor ever springs from the exercises of faith in the great truths of the Gospel respecting this. O Sun of Righteousness, arise and shine with quickening energy! O Spirit of Grace, let thine influences flow down! Then shall we indeed *live to God*.

What a barren heath would all nature be without these: and, when turned by cultivation, under their influences, into the fruitful field or garden, life would soon be lost, and the beautiful enclosures be changed again into the dreary wilderness, if their operations were suspended. So spiritual life, when communicated, must receive a continual supply; and daily experience teaches us, that “all our sufficiency is of God.” Nature is ever sinking back into itself: there is a continual tendency to lose the views of faith and love, and the spiritual exercises of grace: it is His influence alone, in his word and ordinances, that renews the soul, recovers its strength and energy, and prevents its entire declension from the ways of the Lord. This is a lesson that we must continually learn, till we know that without him we can do nothing, that all our springs are in him, that Jesus is our life and our all.

When ready; therefore, to sink back, where should we go but to the Spirit of all grace? In every ordi-

nance let us keep this in view: without his influence they are but dry and empty channels; but, when he communicates his fresh supplies, then faith revives, hope is enlivened, love again expands its blossoms, all the fruits of faith and love flourish, the spiritual strength of the soul is renewed, and life appears active in every part, *acknowledging the powerful quickening influences* of him who is our life. The grace of Christ, therefore, is the one thing needful; whatever else we may do without, without this we can do nothing in religion. Hence as an antidote against the awful declensions of Israel, when they had fallen by their iniquities, and to prevent its recurrence when they should return to him, the Lord promises his grace under this beautiful allusion, “I will be as the dew unto Israel.”

But these are not only absolutely necessary for the being and continuance of life, but with their cooling moistures they tend,

(2.) *To revive and refresh the face of nature.*—The grace of Jesus is compared not to the violent torrent, which carries away all before it: but to the dew which, though in those hot climates it is amazingly copious, is at the same time so gentle, as not to break the bruised reed, nor injure the most tender plant, or flower; and, if compared to the rain, it is not to those sweeping showers which, though salutary to the earth, and useful to man in clearing a noxious atmosphere, are sometimes nevertheless destructive to the field and garden, but to the early and the latter rains, which diffuse their genial influence all around for the benefit of the cultivated land.

By this he represents the gracious drawings of his Spirit on the heart, and the Divine consolation he affords his people in the use of his means and ordinances; when “his doctrine drops as the rain, his speech distils as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.” (Deut. xxxii. 2.) His word, attended with his gracious presence and his com-



forting Spirit, will produce the same effects on the mind of his people, when waiting for his grace and consolations in the means of his appointment. There he is represented in his gracious communications as coming down “like the rain upon the mown grass, and showers that water the earth.” The grass newly mown is moist, adapted to receive the shower of heaven, and to imbibe and vegetate by its influence. Its influence is immediately experienced, and it appears to spring up by an almost visible growth. So the believer, under the humbling influence of the Spirit of the Lord, sitting beneath the ordinances of his church, and there experiencing his gracious and consoling communications, is most especially prepared to receive and welcome them, to be revived by their gracious influences, and to spring up in the beauty and vigour of spiritual growth.

This, believer, you have experienced. When the Lord the Spirit hath humbled you under sin, how kindly has he melted your heart with the view of pardoning mercy, the freeness, the fulness of redeeming grace; the glory of the person of Immanuel, the amazing blessings of the Saviour Jesus; with abundant discoveries of his electing, redeeming, and everlasting love: till he hath drawn you as with the cords of love, and raised your affections to himself! You have been ready to cry out,

“ My willing soul would stay,  
In such a frame as this;  
And sit and sing itself away,  
To everlasting bliss.”

You know the fulfilment of the promise, while waiting according to his command in the ordinances of his house: “If any man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him. I will love him, and manifest myself to him.” (John xiv. 21, 23.) You know what is meant by his presence and the light of his countenance, which

the saints of old so earnestly desired, and which saints on earth still enjoy; and would join the language of the Psalmist, “ Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me. This shall put more joy and gladness into my heart than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory so as I have seen it in the sanctuary.” For this you thirst as the thirsty land for the refreshing shower; and stretch forth the hand unto God, animated with the desire of prayer and earnest supplication. (Compare *Psa.* iv. 6, 7; *lxiii.* 1; *cvi.* 4; *cxliii.* 6—8.) You know well these are not the reveries of enthusiasm, or the flights of fancy; and since believers of old are said to have walked with God, to have had communion with the Father and the Son, to have tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious, you justly expect that the same blessings are still reserved for the people of God in the exercise of faith; and in the enjoyment of them you adore the fulness of his promises, and wait in earnest desire for the repetition and the increase of them. Enthusiasm is that heat of imagination by which we are led to seek with ardour what is vain and unworthy of the attention. You can, therefore, retort the charge upon the proud, the officious, the avaricious, the sensual worldling, deceived by the vanities of time that mock his pursuit and disappoint his expectation. While in the love and favour of God, enjoyed by faith, and communicated by the Spirit in the use of his ordinances, you enjoy a solid and substantial good, excellent in its nature, eternal in its duration, satisfying in its present enjoyment, and never failing the immortal soul.

But you remember, O believer, that not only all saving grace, but all the consolations of grace, are dependent upon the Lord, the gift of his hand, by the communication of his Spirit; and while he knows the situation, the ability, the wants, and the trials of his people, his consolations

are suitably afforded, as may most conduce to their eternal welfare. They are such as sanctify while they comfort, and purify while they exhilarate.

These are the joys your soul desires ; that, walking in the fear of the Lord, *you may possess the comforts of the Holy Ghost.*

The mind of the believer who is walking in the light of the Redeemer's countenance, is like a fine still day without clouds, when all nature is warmed with the sun, enlivened with the breeze. In the evening the dews cover over the earth ; and thus the proper supply of moisture being preserved, the powers of life are kept in activity through all nature, and the morning again appears fresh, fragrant, and beautiful.

But the influence of the dews or rain are most especially felt after the earth has been burnt up with intense heat. To know the truth and extent of the allusion, we should be exposed to the heat of a summer's day in the burning deserts of Arabia, or in the scorching climate of the torrid zone ; and experience the refreshment of those dews which fall there, as the only means of preserving life, and refreshing the vegetable creation\*. Even in our own climate, we see the earth, after a long succession of drought in a dry and hot summer, brown and barren in its appearance, opening in fissures, and destitute of vegetation : " The herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture ; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate : the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness," &c. (Joel i. 18—20.) But, when he again visiteth the earth and watereth it, when the clouds again drop with fatness, and descend in showers of blessings, what an amazing change ! Life, beauty, and joy, seem to spread through all nature. Such is Jesus and his grace to the weary fainting soul : it is the scorching heat of conviction, or of temptation, of fear, doubts, and distresses, which discovers to the soul *his exceeding preciousness.*

\* See the beautiful description of this in Thomson's Seasons.



Then he is compared to the cloud of dew in the heat of harvest. When the believer has experienced the fiery power of the Law upon his conscience, when his soul has been distressed with the conviction of deserved wrath, when the awful power of temptations has excited the fiery passion of the soul, when he has trembled lest he should be overcome by the indwelling corruption of his heart, how exceeding all resemblance is the love and grace of Jesus, when he returns to bless the soul with his light and favour! When the Spirit of grace speaks peace to the conscience, in the application of his redeeming blood and justifying righteousness; when he enables faith to exercise itself upon his fulness of grace and salvation, to trust the faithfulness and promises of a reconciled God, and to look forward with a believing prospect of the all-sufficiency of his blessings for time and eternity; when he manifests himself to the believing mind, as he doth not unto the world; when he opens his heart of love with all its infinite benefits, and pours out of his abundant and suitable consolations upon the weary spirit,—the fears of conviction are changed for the humble confidence of faith,—the condemning sentence of the law for the grace of the Gospel,—the terrors of guilt for the hope of salvation,—the conflicting passions are stilled like the noisy tempest at the word of the Saviour, and peace and joy and holy tranquillity bespeak the presence of him who is the peace, the life, the glory of his people. Lord, be thou as the dew unto my soul, and let thy sweet influences descend as the shower upon the grass.

(3.) Nature may, indeed, live for some time without the fresh supplies of moisture, but its strength will soon be exhausted; the vegetable world will dwindle away and become weak. And though, by the influence of the sun, it may run up in height, yet its appearance will be weak and slender. There can be no firmness of body, nor *strength of vegetation*. So that oftentimes it will be impossible to tell whether life remain or not. But the light and air, together with the *rain and dews*, confirm and enliven every part, and make the plant *strong and vigorous*;

so that we see, as it were, and feel the health of nature. For the small rain, and the gentle dews, give a fresh impulse to vegetable life, and invigorate its growth.

Thus the communications of the grace of Jesus,—Oh, how they animate in duty! The reviving influences of his Spirit have always a sanctifying tendency: and those are not his consolations which carnalize the mind, or draw it away from God; which produce inattention to his ways, or indifference to his commands. Such reviving seasons give new vigour to the spiritual life, support it when fainting, and recover its decays; and, in general, are so timed by the all-disposing hand of the gracious Redeemer as to be the means of spiritual growth and strength. Not like cordials to a sickly patient, which may increase the disease; but like wine to him who is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy hearts. (Prov. xxxi. 6.) Not like showers of rain upon the saturated field; but as the refreshing dew to the thirsty land. He knows the best time and measure in which to bestow his consolations; and often dispenses them when least expected, because then most precious and most salutary; and, when the believer is ready to yield up all, renews the spring of life with the joys of his salvation. Then the mind feels the power of his love: it rises in its exercises of holy love to heaven, and in desires to glorify him. This makes his ways pleasant, and his ordinances delightful. The mind is animated with faith, love, and zeal, and goes forth unshaken by the assaults of the enemy; strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Then every duty is pleasant; and, in the like enjoyment of Divine love, he rises above the influences of created things, and dies to the world AS HE LIVES TO GOD. The sure promises of his word encourage the believer to expect these reviving communications in the path of duty; for though “the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up on wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and



not faint.” (Isa. xl. 30, 31.) Therefore, “wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.” (Psa. xxvii. 14.)

(4.) The rains and dews are the cause of *all fruitfulness*.—This was the promise to repentant Israel, when for their sins the land was made desolate; “He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former and the latter rain, in the first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil.” (Joel ii. 23, 24.) And again: “Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain; to every one grass in the field.” (Compare Zech. x. 1; Jer. ii. 4.) The Psalmist has beautifully described the natural effect,—“Thou visitest the earth and waterest it; thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God which is full of water; thou preparest them corn when thou hast so provided for it. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly; thou settlest the furrows thereof; thou makest it soft with showers; thou blessest the springing thereof. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness: they drop upon the pastures of the wilderness, and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks, the vallies also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.” (Psa. lxxv. 9—13.) The Prophet has represented the same effect in the order of grace, *under a beautiful allusion to the order of nature*. “Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open (to receive the salutary influence), and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together: I the Lord have created it.” (Isa. xlv. 8.) When the benign influences of his grace, who, as the Righteous One, the Lord our Righteousness, come down from heaven, are felt in the heart, and received there in faith, the effects are salvation, discoverable in the fruits of righteousness, springing up under the same influences in the earthly heart of man. This is the plan of the eternal Jehovah, his own method of restoring



his ruined creatures. Thus, under the veil of beautiful allegory, so used in the Old Testament, we have the same doctrine which the Apostle has clearly stated in the New; that when the grace of God appears bringing salvation to the heart, it then teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. (Tit. ii. 11, &c.) This alone will make the heart of man fruitful towards God. But when once this grace hath changed its nature, and made the corrupt tree good, these Divine influences will become effectual, and sanctify the conduct. By another image, which has indeed a near relation to this, the believer is considered as ingrafted into Christ: therefore, without him, as a dead branch, he can do nothing, can bring forth no fruit to perfection: whatever blossoms or fruit may strike the eye, they will only ultimately deceive the expectation, and fade and die away. But, supported by that vital moisture which he communicates, his fruitfulness is secured, and “IF ANY MAN ABIDE IN ME, THE SAME BRINGETH FORTH MUCH FRUIT.” The allusion is here the same to the supply of vegetable moisture which diffuses itself through all the plant, and thus keeps alive every part of it; and, digested and arranged in the channels through which it passes, disposes it for the bringing forth fruit *after its kind*. But the quantity of fruit as much depends upon the rain and dew as upon the sun: without a proper supply of these the fruit will either be little in quantity, small in size, or perhaps will drop off before it ripens. So the believer’s growth and fruitfulness is equally dependent upon the Spirit of grace from Christ Jesus, as upon the glories of his person, and the fulness of his work: these, indeed, are in order to the other, and the fulness of the Spirit is in his hand to give, and promised by him to all his people. Hence the gracious effects of his government are beautifully represented in the last words of David, which are doubtless a promise of the purity, justice, and blessings of his kingdom, introduced in the most solemn manner to claim our attention, and to

excite our love. "These be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me (a solemn introduction to claim our attention to the glories and excellencies of Jesus the King of Israel), He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God; and he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." (2 Sam. xxiii. 1—5.)

When the Prophet is representing the grace of Jesus under the same beautiful allusion, he traces its effects in the abundant fruitfulness of those to whom it is communicated. When the Lord becomes "as the dew unto Israel, he shall grow as the lily (the bulbous root of which having lain in the earth as dead through the winter season, quickly starts up into all its beauty in the returning spring), and cast forth his roots as Lebanon (in firmness and durability). His branches shall spread (for extensive usefulness), and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree (which is always green, in the justifying righteousness of Christ, and sanctifying graces of his Spirit), and his smell as Lebanon (for fragrance and delight, acceptable to God). They that dwell under his shadow shall return: they shall revive as the corn (which, though it dies first, revives and brings forth much fruit), and grow as the vine (whose branches extend the furthest of any tree, and both of which are beautifully adapted for general usefulness): the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon (of the most delicate flavour). Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?" turning to God from all beside in true repentance, and entire dependence. (Hos. xiv. 5—8, and ver. 2.)

The regenerating grace of the Spirit of Christ is generally represented in Scripture under this allusion; for as water is the fluid which circulates through all nature, and perhaps unites all its parts together, which in union with



the vegetable oil expands and beautifies every plant, without which it moulders away ; so the grace of Christ is the great mean of communicating, preserving, and quickening the spiritual life of the soul ; and as well might all nature be kept alive without water, as the believer without grace. The great promise, therefore, of the new church, is clothed under this idea : “ I will sprinkle clean water upon them, and they shall be clean from all their filthiness ; and from all their idols will I cleanse them : ” which is explained by “ putting his Spirit within them.” (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, &c.) And again ; “ I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground ; ” *i. e.* “ I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring : and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.” (Isaiah xlv. 3, 4.) And in the New Testament our Lord uses the same allusion : “ The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” “ He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water : but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.” (John iv. 10—14 ; and vii. 37—39.)

Hence, then, it is evident, that wherever there is much of the Spirit’s influence there will be much fruit brought forth unto God ;—in the present world the fruits of repentance, faith, love, zeal, and holy obedience ; of joy, peace, thankfulness, and praise ; to the glory of God, for the welfare of mankind, for the purification of the heart to God, and as an earnest of the eternal fruit of glory beyond.

But if these things be entirely dependent upon the work and influences of the Spirit of the Lord, it may be asked, How shall I attain them ? “ They that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God : they shall still bring forth fruit even in old age ; they shall be fat and flourishing,” &c. (Psa. xcii. 12—15.) In the use of means we have the promise of his grace ; and he giveth his Holy Spirit to them who ask it. If, then, we



were living more in a simple dependence upon him we should receive more from him: and, while experiencing his delightful communications, should become *more fruitful, more honourable, and more happy Christians*. His throne is the throne of grace; and, if we value it, we shall come there for it. What Job declares of his friends in the time of his honour and prosperity, may with much more propriety mark our conduct towards the all-gracious Redeemer at his throne of grace,—“They waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide as (the earth) for the latter rain,” when “my speech dropped upon them.” (Job xxix. 22, 23.) And “then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning (for the rising sun); and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” (Hos. vi. 3.) “Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

But lastly, the ultimate effects of the rain and dew are, to *mature the fruits* of the earth, and prepare them for the vintage and the harvest. And nothing is more conducive to this than the copious nightly dews. They fill the corn, enlarge the fruits with juices, which, when conducted as it were by the heat of the sun, according to the nature of the different plant or tree, afford that infinite variety of delicious *savours with which the earth abounds*. “Blessed of the Lord (said the great Jewish Prophet), be the land of Joseph, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew and for the deep which coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun; and for the precious things put forth by the moon; and for the chief things of the ancient mountains; and for the precious things of the lasting hills; and for the precious things of the earth, and fulness thereof; and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren.” (Deut. xxxiii. 13–16.)

So grace attending every providence matures the believer like the early and the latter rain. Every dispensation produces its influence for this ultimate effect, under the direction of *the heavenly husbandman*. In his own proper time, therefore, the believer shall be transplanted to flourish in his church above. But not till the right time. The great Lord of the harvest knows his wheat, and the trees of his own right-hand planting: he will gather them as a shock of corn in its season; and the fruit of the other when ripe and ready for his own use. They shall then spring up into everlasting life, and flourish in the heavenly inclosure; shall bring forth fruit to perfection more worthy of himself, more delightful to them.

Now is the sowing time, the planting time; now some little fruits of grace appear, but then shall they ripen into the fruits of glory. All, indeed, of the same nature, but then perfected, matured, without any mixture; without any danger of injury or decay, eternally glorious, somewhat like him who is their life, and who there appears as the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God. When by faith I view the Redeemer in the full meaning and extent of this delightful allusion, well may I say with the Apostle,—“Whom having not seen I love; in whom, though now I see him not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.” (1 Pet. i. 8.) In him is my present peace, my acceptance with God, my joy, my consolation, my strength, my fruitfulness; in him my title to glory, and through his grace I expect the *meetness for its enjoyment!*

Oh, let me be thankful for that infinite fulness of grace which there is in Christ Jesus; that through him I may come boldly to the Throne of Grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of my need. By thus coming to him let me put myself as it were under his influences, that I may enjoy these sweet experiences of his grace. The copiousness of those dews which fall in the tropical climate can bear no resemblance to the abundance of grace which is in him, and which he communicates to

his people. We are told that, in those dry countries, they fall in the night in such great abundance as to wet through every thing ; and preserve vegetation in the most dry and burning seasons. And even with us they are oftentimes very large in dry summers ; and the largest in *the hottest*. For this dry and barren wilderness the all-sufficiency of our Jesus is our constant supply : in him there can be no want, and therefore we stand complete in him, because in him is all the fulness of wisdom and knowledge ; yea, all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, that out of his fulness we may receive and grace for grace : we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The dews of his grace are copious and salutary, the showers of his grace supplied by the immense ocean of his infinite perfection, descending from the fountain of eternal love, administered and disposed by the hand of Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, come down, in their suitable season, in an almighty sufficiency of supply for all the wants and necessities of his people, and for all the purposes of life and salvation. For our God is able to make all grace abound towards us, that we always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. (2 Cor. ix. 8.) And the Apostle, therefore, expresses his confidence as to the Philippians (Phil. iv. 19) ;—“ My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” And “ this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us ; and, if we know that he heareth us, we know that we have the petitions which we have desired of him. (1 John v. 14, 15.) This confidence is grounded upon his own promise,—“ Whatever ye shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.” (John xiv. 13, 14.) Happy confidence of the believing mind ! Oh, that we could realize it more in faith ; to the glory of the Redeemer, and our own consolation ! We are not straitened in him but in our own selves. He is yet the same, and will be the same,—“ Christ Jesus, the same yesterday,



to-day, and for ever." Lord, increase our faith, that it may honour thee in its constant dependence upon thee ; in expecting all from thee according to thy promise ; and then thou wilt honour that faith, or rather, wilt honour thine own promise, and thy faithfulness and truth in fulfilling it ; and bestow the richest blessings even on us !

But here let us for a moment consider how these blessings have been obtained for us. Are we refreshed with the dews of Divine love and favour ? Are we watered with the showers of grace ? It is because that Jesus who communicates and dispenses them was burnt with the fire of the Divine law, scorched by the heat of Divine indignation, torn by the storms of justice ; because He bare our sins, and carried our sorrows,—was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities. When we are agitated and distressed with the fiery heat of an accusing conscience, under a conviction of the holy law of God ; when we are exhausted with sorrows, trials, and temptations, let us then realize what Jesus endured for us ; we then see and feel a little of what he endured, and yet it is but a little : his affliction hath alleviated ours ; and the sting of them all remained in his heart,—the power of Divine indignation, and the curses of the Law,—the righteous punishment of our iniquities. The unmixed cup of Divine wrath for sin, was his ; was drank by him to the dregs, and shall never be the portion of any of his people : and hence our afflictions are light afflictions, which are but for a moment ; they work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. And it is only our unbelief, or the weakness of our faith, that causes us to sink under them. They are all in his hands for our good, and he has taken away the sting. But what, then, must he have endured when he cried, " Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ! "

His Divine nature and almighty power could alone have supported him through, and made him conqueror over, all. Blessed be his Name that he has triumphed, and triumphed for us. If we, then, have returning peace, refreshing

consolations, believing views, that animate the mind, they arise from this consideration, that the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. Let us, then, value the amazing gift and blessings which were obtained at such an amazing price, even the condescension, *the sorrows, the agony, the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ*; and the still greater agony of his soul when it was “sorrowful even unto death.” Let us admire his love, adore his person, and trust his grace, for all we want.—How sweet are the actual refreshments of his grace here below, when he comes down, in the influences of his Spirit, as the shower of rain, or the dew upon the grass! Soon he shall be to the sleeping dust of his saints as the reviving dew: “Thy dew shall be as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.” (Isaiah xxvi. 19.) Then shall they spring up to eternal glory. What then shall heaven be, where grace shall be perfected in glory? Here there are many changes; the burning suns of trial and temptation again and again afflict the soul, while few refreshing consolations intervene; but there no scenes of sorrow shall intermingle with the holy felicity. Here at best we see through a glass darkly, but there face to face; here by faith, there by sight; here we enjoy partly, but there fully; here the hottest season soon comes to an end, but there “thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.”

Oh, may I live to reach the place  
Where he unfolds his lovely face;  
There all his glory to behold,  
And sing his praise to harps of gold.

Then we shall need no more the showers of blessings, when beholding and enjoying the ocean of infinite and everlasting love.

## ESSAY VII.

**Ransom.**

**I**F the truth and holiness of the eternal Jehovah be immutable, then the purposes and the plans of his redeeming love in the counsels of eternity must be immutable also. In whatever season of their accomplishment we stand, or whatever part of their fulfilment we contemplate, we shall only discern the same design carried forward in different ways to its completion. Hence, we are told, that Jesus Christ, the person by whom the great plan is conducted, is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever:” his power, his love, his grace, are eternally the same from the counsels of eternity, till the last believer is collected into the kingdom of glory. The Gospel, therefore,—which is the development of that plan, and the revelation of his person, work, and salvation,—is invariably the same. To ancient believers the Gospel was preached as well as unto us; and though to them only in types and figures, and to us in the clearest light of Divine testimony, and under the confirmation of certain facts, its great truths are unchangeable, and its blessings the same to both. Hence, we find also that the same names are applied to the person of Christ, and the same terms are used in describing the deliverance of his people, in the Old Testament as in the New.—He is the Redeemer; his work is a redemption, a ransom, a sacrifice, a propitiation. These are terms which are continually used, even in reference to those circumstances which were intended as typical of his undertaking and work; and are so applied by the Prophet to the one, as evidently to refer to the other, and, no doubt, led the mind of the believing Israelite to the glory of Gospel times.



(1 Pet. i. 10, &c.) It was necessary that this should be the case, in a religion from God ; and, since it is the case, and the Old Testament and the New, in all their leading truths, most minutely correspond ; hence, we have a plain proof that we are not following cunningly devised fables, when believing the great mystery of the Gospel : but our faith receives the fullest confirmation, when we behold the same truths which now shine around us in the glories of that dispensation, revealed with increasing degrees of evidence in the former dispensation of God, and the discovery of his will to man.

The title of Christ which we are now to contemplate, and the work attributed to him therein, is peculiarly calculated to establish these views. It is one of the most essential characters of the Messiah, by which he is known in the Old Testament and in the New ;—a title and a character most suited to the fears, the doubts, the necessities of a guilty sinner. The name includes within itself all the glories of the Gospel, all those points which constitute the foundation of a sinner's hope ; and he who here bears the name claims a right to it, because he, and he only, performs the thing signified by it. He is our **RANSOM**. May the consideration of it afford the humble penitent the consolation which it includes ! His redeemed people, ransomed from sin and guilt, will then believe, trust in, and love him. The blood of his atonement, the sacrifice, the propitiation for their sins, is a price that will deserve the blessings it procures : and he who has paid it ever lives to bestow them, till all his ransomed saints return and come to Sion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.

A ransom is a price paid to redeem a person from some kind of bondage, a debtor from the anger of creditors, a captive from the galling yoke of slavery, or a condemned rebel from the hand of avenging justice. All and each of these views are applicable to mankind ; and corresponding thereto is the gracious deliverance that the Lord obtains for his people.

A short view of his state may not be improper, to prepare the mind for a more interesting and affecting view of the inestimable value of the ransom-price whereby he is delivered\*. Man, as a creature of God, is under the most evident obligation of perfect obedience to his will; and, as being under the law, by which he had given his bond to the observance of its demands, he is under an obligation to render to it all that honour which is suitable to a holy God from a dependent creature. This was the disposition as well as the duty of upright man; and still it must remain the duty, though it is not the disposition, of fallen man. Hence, man is a sinner: he has not, and does not, render to God the glory which is his due, nor to his law the honour which it requires; and his transgressions may well be considered as an *accumulated load of debt to his almighty Creator*. This idea, however, though true, does not mark out the full turpitude of sin. It is not only a simple debt, placing under the obligation of payment; but it is a guilty rebellion, a debt to a law of which it is a transgression, and which, therefore, implies a criminal offence, for which the Divine law and justice necessarily require COMPLETE SATISFACTION. Man, therefore, owes to God not only that obedience which was originally due, but the restoration of his injured honour, a full atonement for his own provocations, a full reparation for the contempt which has been put upon the character of God, and an adequate compensation for the injury which his law and government have sustained. This justice demands as the term of his deliverance, a term which he will never be able to fulfil; and hence, every mouth must be stopped, and all the world stand guilty before God. Hence, the justice of God declares man a sinner, a criminal debtor, and delivers him over to the sentence of a righteous law. Oh, how awful is the debt of sin! how miserable the situation in which a sinner stands before God! Not only is he unable to atone for the past, but his debt is con-

\* See this particularly handled also under the title "Redeemer." Ser. III. Ess. VI.

tinually increasing. The law of God, instead of justifying, condemns even his best services; an infinitely holy God, an eternally holy and unchangeable law, demands unceasing and spotless obedience, nor admits of the least imperfection. His most holy service, therefore, through his mixture of imperfection and pollution, would still add to his guilt,—would leave him more a debtor, and sink him still deeper in condemnation,—were it not for the interposition of redeeming love: his debt increasing through the continued depravity of the heart would eternally increase and ensure eternal punishment in the region of everlasting sorrow, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

This leads to another view of the state of man, which is very common in scriptural language—that of a captive and a slave, who having deserted his allegiance to his great Creator, he has delivered him over to the power of satan, who, working through the natural depravity of his heart, reduces him under his bondage, and leads him captive at his will. Hence, he is called “the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” He claims them as his own property by voluntary surrender, and rules over them with absolute power; securing them first to himself as the willing slaves of sin, that he may secure them as his eternal subjects *in the flames of hell*. In another light, therefore, man is considered as a prisoner; for the Scripture hath “*concluded* (or shut up) *all under sin*.” He is now shut up under guilt, till he shall be finally shut up in the region of eternal sorrow, there to pay the utmost farthing; which must be ever paying, but will never be paid throughout eternity. These are views which ought deeply to impress our minds, as they give us a true idea of our state as sinners; and which alone could lay the necessity for such a Divine interposition, such a wonderful work of the ever-adorable Redeemer on our behalf. It is the full consciousness of this which will alone render his work precious to us; lead us to embrace it in faith,



and to adore and admire the depths of his wisdom, the sovereignty of his love, and the *abounding riches of his grace*; while we plead alone, but in the full confidence of faith, the Ransom of his blood as our *only hope of salvation*.

A proper conception of the holiness, spirituality; and immutability of the law of God, is most effectual to produce the conviction of this truth. By the law is the knowledge of sin; and wherever it comes with power into the heart, the sinner dies to all his former vain confidences, and discovers the guilt and helplessness of his state. (Rom. vii. 9.) The truth and justice of God then appears as necessarily hostile to every transgression, and solemnly engaged to vindicate the honour of the great Creator and Lawgiver in the destruction of the sinner. How important, then, appears the advice of our Lord: "Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison." (Matt. v. 25.) But well may it be asked, how can this be effected? The consciousness of its necessity sets the convicted sinner at work, labouring and toiling by his own exertion to satisfy and to obey, till he finds, alas! that he can do nothing in this great and arduous work: then the law becomes the schoolmaster to lead him to Christ; for the discovery of this by the law drives the enlightened sinner to seek deliverance out of himself, and makes Jesus, the great Deliverer of the Gospel, *most precious to his soul*. The Ransom is found which man could never find; the Ransom is paid which man could never pay; it only remains for the faith of the penitent sinner to embrace it, and it becomes his in all its benefits. When an infinite debt stood out against us, when our vile rebellions proclaimed us guilty, when law and justice pronounced the condemning sentence, the blessed Jesus, moved by his own love, undertook the work of mediation and of surety, that he might restore to our souls their forfeited privileges. Voluntarily he endured the due punishment of sin, and

completed the ransom of his church. Now we address to the guilty, the penitent, and the contrite, the gracious consolation. The eternal Jehovah in the Gospel proclaims, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found the ransom: and to this God's own discovery and gift we point the guilty and trembling sinner, even to the full, the perfect, the accepted RANSOM OF HIS SOUL. A slight attention to its nature and value will discover its suitability, excellency, and all-sufficiency.

What, then, is the ransom given? This is a most important consideration. If such be our situation, such the debt we owe, such our obligations, and such the requirements of law and justice,—if no man can redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him,—who is this that promises himself to undertake the work; who engages and pledges his heart to approach unto God for us? Is he able to perform the work? What has he of his own to give suitable and sufficient for such a design? “He gave himself (says the Apostle) for us;” and the Evangelist, “He gave his life.” But what dignity is there in his person, what value in his life, that it can avail before God for that which none *else could accomplish*? These are serious questions to the enlightened mind that feels the importance of the subject.

We can know nothing of his dignity or character, but what his word informs us of. Here, then, let us turn our attention, determined to believe whatever that word declares, which, as the word of God, is the word of truth; and the great glory of which is, that it is God's own revelation of the Redeemer's glory, the discovery of his undertaking, and his fulfilment of the work, and the consequent collocation of all blessings in his hands, for the salvation of his redeemed people. Our minds are naturally prepared to expect a great Saviour to accomplish a work which neither men nor angels could perform; one above both men and angels: but who, then, can this be? He must be one who can merit by his work or suffering; who can render a price suited to the glory of the Divine perfections,

the honour of the Divine law, and the demands of justice ; and that which he renders must be *his own*. If what he gives be the property of the creditor, it can never be considered as the payment of the debt. Hence if he be required to give himself, he must be his own property, and at his own disposal. If he lays down his life, his life must be his own, and under his own power.

Does not, then, his taking upon him this office, and bearing this character, evidently prove, that he must have *life in himself* ; that he is the “ *Lord of life*,” and therefore must decidedly imply, HIS ESSENTIAL GODHEAD ? But what is thus evidently implied in this character and office is plainly declared to belong to him. “ The Word (which) was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” was “ in the *beginning with God, and was God*.” He who humbled himself, and became of no reputation, who took upon himself the form of a Servant, and was made in the fashion of a man ; who then, as our Ransom, humbled himself still more, even to the death upon the cross, was eternally in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But, because he could not act nor suffer as God, behold unto us a Child is born, and a Son is given, whose name is, the mighty God, the everlasting Father (or, Father of eternity) (Isa. ix. 6) ; and his name on earth is, Jesus, Jehovah, the Saviour, and *Immanuel, God with us*.

Hence he was able voluntarily to undertake the work, perfectly to obey, satisfactorily to suffer, and to give a dignity, a merit, an all-sufficient virtue to his obedience and suffering. Had he been found as a mere man, a common man, or any even the most exalted creature, he would have rested under the same obligations as must ever attach themselves to a creature. He would never have acted for another, since obedience, if not suffering, were due from himself : He could never have offered an atonement nor paid a ransom for the benefit of others. It is his Divine nature alone that renders him all-sufficient and meritorious ; for though, as God, he could not die, yet he



who did die was God, and the Scripture therefore speaks consistently, when it speaks of the “ church of God, which he PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD.” This alone could give that value to his work which renders it suitable to such a purpose, and the infinite virtue which it thence derives lays the sure foundation of the sinner’s hope, and renders it all-sufficient for the glory of the Divine perfection in the salvation of the *chief of sinners*.

Those, therefore, who deny the Divine power and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, very consistently deny the claims of Divine justice, the guilty state of man, his need of an atonement, and the vicarious work of Jesus as the Surety of his people. This however is the distinguishing feature of the Gospel, and its distinguishing glory above every human system; and they who deny this can see but little glory in the wonders of redeeming love, in that which angels desire to look into: they deprive the Gospel of all its distinguishing glories, and reduce the great Christian mystery to a mere system of REFINED ETHICS.

It is the most wonderful display of the Father’s love, that he gave his only begotten Son; that “ in the fulness of time he sent forth his Son made of a woman, *made under the law*, to redeem us who were under the law.” (Gal. iv. 4.) The eternal Spirit proves the greatness of his love, in preparing him that body by his own immediate operation, and thus fitting him for the work, and supplying his human nature with his Divine influence without measure, till he had accomplished the work of redemption. But herein is the love of Jesus, that, though one with and equal with the Father, he undertook the work itself, and submitted to be found in that state in which He might both suffer and die to ransom our lost souls. What, then, may we not expect from him? What cannot he perform? What price is he not able to pay? He who declared in the counsels of eternity, “ I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death;” is indeed able to redeem and save unto the uttermost.

Under the Levitical dispensation, the nature of the

economy of redemption was continually kept in view; its legal provisions had continual reference to this, and were so administered as to be typical of its leading truths and facts. Whenever, therefore, the children of Israel were numbered, a sum of money was to be given to the Lord for each of them, a ransom for his soul; a plain acknowledgment of their forfeitures, and the need of a better ransom. This was to be even for the poor and for the rich, because there is but one ransom price for all, of which all have equal need; because "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and must be "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:" and this ransom price was to be retained for the service of the tabernacle, as a memorial for the children of Israel; to denote that we must never forget our ruined guilty state, nor the value of that infinite ransom which the great Redeemer has offered for our deliverance from the wrath of God and the curse of sin. (Exod. xxx. 12—16.) In some cases, when the life was forfeited, the ransom was arbitrary: he was to pay whatsoever was laid upon him (Exod. xxi. 30); for none but the appointed atonement will ever save a sinner, or redeem his forfeited soul from the sentence of the law. But here what a ransom was necessary! what a price was required! what a price was paid! suited to the dignity of the offended, and the indignity of the offence. Nothing short of this could have effected the purchase, and when nothing else could appear of equal value but his own infinite and eternal person, "He gave himself for us."

Had he ransacked all the stores of nature, the treasures of secret places, this might have purchased the kingdom, but not redeemed one immortal soul from death. Had he given all the world of inanimate nature, and devoted it to destruction, the tribute of the righteous justice of God, in this he might have appeared glorious, but the value had not been equal to the redemption of one soul. Had he given all the generations of men to have saved one, they were all justly forfeited already; and the sacrifice would have

shown, in a most tremendous manner, the severity of his justice, but could never have prevailed for the benefit of that one soul, or its deliverance from death. Had all the heavenly hosts been sacrificed for the race of man, here would have been an astonishing gift, most amazing love, most fearful justice; but still no atonement could have been made thereby for the sin of man. He who created had a right to destroy, till his own truth and faithfulness were pledged for preservation: no merit, therefore, could have hence arisen to claim the pardon, the deliverance, the salvation of man.

Behold, then, a gift infinitely beyond; a gift upon which there could be no claim, either of God or man; a sacrifice, the offering of which was infinitely meritorious, suitable to the demands of immutable and infinite justice. This implies that he knew well the nature of his undertaking from the beginning, when, in his amazing love, he engaged for the arduous work; and, therefore, through every step we admire the consistency of his heart, the riches of his grace. Of what an infinite value is the price of our redemption! The very offer implies an ability which could belong to none but the eternal God; such obligation already rested upon every creature as to render them unequal to the task; not God, not Christ, can give a greater gift; but all in heaven and earth can never equal this. The Lord of universal nature, by whom all things were created, and in whom all things exist, “He gave himself!” The Son of God gave himself into human nature, that he might be like his brethren whom he purposed to redeem. He gave himself to be made under the law, that he might be obedient to the law for man. He gave himself to the temptations of the enemy, that he might overcome for us. He gave himself to bear all our infirmities and our sorrows, that he might remove them from his people. He gave himself to all the conflicts and agony of the garden, to sweat great drops of blood, and drink the bitter cup of Divine indignation, that he might deliver us from the wrath to come. He gave himself



into the hands of the cruel mob; to the indignation of rulers, scribes, and priests; into the power of the Roman deputy, to be suspended on the cross, and there "*He gave his life,*" *the ransom of our souls.* "I lay down (says he) my life for the sheep: I lay down my life, that I might take it again: no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." (John x. 11, 15, 17, 18.) When seized by the insulting band, falsely accused, approved as innocent by his judge himself, and yet condemned, scourged, and insulted, he bears his cross on his agonizing body, with the still deeper weight of our guilt upon his soul; till, suspended on the accursed tree, he bare our sins in his own body on the tree, and appears as one under the curse, while justice exacts the last mite of satisfaction. He who voluntarily undertook, voluntarily submits and resolutely endures, till he could say, "It is finished;" and then he gave UP THE GHOST, and voluntarily resigned his breath.

What was this whole scene of suffering, but the submission of the Redeemer, by his sustaining the actual punishment of our sins; there "he became sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (1 Cor. v. 21.) There "it pleased the Father to bruise him, and to put him to grief, when he made his soul an offering for sin" (Isa. liii. 10): there the precious blood was shed, which, as it closed and consummated the scene of his suffering, is generally spoken of as the price of redemption. "We are redeemed, not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious *blood* of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19); precious in the sight of God for its infinite value; precious to the conscience of the convinced sinner for its purifying virtue; precious to the heart of every believer for the all-sufficient and everlasting blessings which are obtained by it; precious to all around the throne, who are there alone through its virtue, and because they have washed thier robes in this blood of

the Lamb;—and to it the whole company of the redeemed shall ascribe the whole glory and praise throughout eternity.

Here, then, we behold (1) the *ransom*; none other than the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God and man, in one Christ. “They shall look upon me,” says Jehovah, “whom they have pierced:” this gave the value to his suffering and to his blood.—Here we discern (2) *its value*: without this it could have no more real value than that of other creatures.—But if its value can be no less than infinite, here we see (3) the *purpose* for which it was shed: “*for us*,” for all who believe, for all his sheep. The innocent Jesus could need no payment for himself: the Just, the Holy, the Righteous One, could neither be exposed to suffering nor death; the Law had no original demands, justice no accusation, injured government no claim; on him: in our stead he took the obligation, and in our stead he obeyed and suffered; “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;” thus reconciling his people to God in the body of his flesh through death, blotting out there the hand-writing of ordinances which was against us, which was contrary to us, and taking it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. For our pardon, reconciliation, and deliverance, he endures our curse; and we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin;—pardon for infinite offence, and pardon

By means that speak its value infinite;  
A pardon bought with blood, with blood Divine;  
With blood Divine of Him I made my foe!

Oh, how amazing the condescension of Jesus when he who was in the form of God thus truly emptied himself, and humbled himself to the death upon the cross!

Thanks be to God for this unspeakable gift. This is most evidently the Gospel plan of redemption; the only revealed way in which a sinner can come near to God. Herein the wisdom of God is manifested, as well as the riches of his sovereign grace: nor will any sinner ever

experience mercy, or obtain salvation, but through the blood of the Lamb. And that the death of the adorable Redeemer was not only the confirmation of his doctrine, but designed, and offered, and now presented, as an atonement for sin, a price for the redemption of our souls, is the comforting language of the Old Testament and the New, the distinguishing glory of Christianity, and the Gospel foundation of a sinner's hope. If the law and justice of God require satisfaction for the sin of man, nothing else could ever effect it; and if God be true, and his law holy, they must require it: nothing, therefore, could ever give hope to a guilty perishing sinner, but such a discovery of infinite wisdom, grace, and love, such an amazing act of mercy; and without this the Gospel would be destitute of that which it is its principal design to reveal—a way of salvation for ruined and helpless sinners. But now the atonement has been made, the ransom paid down; and as this was the eternal design of God in the counsels of everlasting love, his own plan and appointment, so we have sufficient evidence to satisfy our minds that the Lord Jesus Christ has finished the work, and that his payment has been accepted on the behalf of his people. “He who died for our sins hath risen again for our justification;” and herein the Father bore his testimony, together with the Holy Ghost, of the acceptance of his person and work; and when the Mediator, the Surety, receives in his own person the full discharge, he has the authority to liberate the criminal debtor, and restore him to his forfeited privileges. The rising Saviour, thus acknowledged of the Father, ascended to claim the blessings he had obtained, and in our nature is admitted to sit at the right hand of the Majesty on high, “as the Prince and the Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins;” thus to introduce to every blessing of the new covenant in his blood, all of which are deposited in his hand, to bestow suitably, seasonably, fully, and eternally upon all who believe.

The needy perishing sinner, who claims it in faith, shall



be interested in his salvation, and be brought into the possession of those privileges which the Saviour's offering hath obtained.—Poor, opposed, and trembling sinner, take encouragement, not in thyself, but in thy Saviour. Present the ransom-price before the throne, and then come boldly with all thy guilt and fears: let faith look at the cross, and behold the full atonement; look at the risen Saviour, and behold his acceptance on thy behalf. You are discouraged because you have nothing to recommend you, no price in your hands to pay: but behold it is done! “Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it. Shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.” You are directed not to bring your money, but to come without money and without price; to come in faith and take the blessing. Look to this ransom, and thy debt is paid: it is cancelled, for “he that believeth is not condemned;”—“there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus:” thy guilty conscience may have peace; the curse of the law is endured, the honour of the law and justice is maintained, the truth and holiness of the Divine nature are amply satisfied, for all thine offences. Satan can no longer hold his captive in willing or unwilling bondage; “for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he: therefore they shall come, and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord for wheat and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd, and their souls shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all” (Jer. xxxi. 11, 12): death has lost his dominion, and every enemy yields his usurped power into the hand of Him who hath purchased his people to himself. Infinite in his person, in his merit, and in his blessing, his power and grace are equal to every possible state of a penitent sinner. Be his sins as deep as hell, he may still cry, “Oh, the depth of the love of Christ!” Be they as high as heaven, or wide

as the sea, still that love which is an height, a depth, a length, and breadth, which passeth all understanding, infinitely exceeds. This is a fountain of grace still open through life, where we may daily come, and come even to the end, for its virtue is everlasting and unchangeable; and when all the redeemed are received into the kingdom of glory, his fulness will be still unexhausted, for it is "*all the fulness of the Godhead.*"

This is the only ground of a sinner's consolation,—the price is paid and accepted; this is the all-sufficient ground of faith and confidence. The Covenant-Redeemer has the right, and to him is given the authority, "to say to the prisoner, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves" (Isa. xlix. 9); and now "the captive exile hastens that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail" (Isa. li. 14); and, having ransomed his people for himself, as his people, his property, his inheritance, he will not fail to claim them, and put them in possession of his blessings. They shall no more be under the curse of the law; their guilt is done away: He presents them in himself, the objects of his everlasting love and favour; the power of sin and Satan is destroyed: brought into the family and household of faith, they are become children of God in him, and soon will he complete their felicity in the kingdom of his glory; for they shall never perish, but have *everlasting life*. Blessed effects of *his redeeming love*! What can be too large for the believer's expectation, resting upon such a ground as this? The glory of the Redeemer's person, the value of his precious blood, can never be equalled by all the blessings which creatures can enjoy throughout eternity; for what blessings can equal, in their progressive bestowment, that which is in itself infinite? Look, then, at the exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel: these are intended to direct thy faith into the nature and extent of thy privileges; "these are all yea and amen, in Christ Jesus:" nor canst thou find a want that is not there provided for, or a desire but what meets a full supply:



these encourage thy expectation of all grace in time, and direct thee to all glory in eternity, “the gift of God in Jesus our Lord.”

How blinded is the sinner, who denies his need of such a Saviour! how guilty the sinner that rejects him! Let me ever plead the payment of my Surety for the forgiveness of my sin, and the cancelling of my enormous debt of guilt, and trust that I shall never plead in vain. It is in this temper alone that I can obtain the blessing; for “if any say, I have sinned and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not, he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.” (Job. xxxiii. 27.) Hence we learn the means of obtaining a practical and experimental interest in the great salvation. Reconciled in Christ Jesus, infinite grace ever dwells in the heart of a reconciled God; infinite blessings are ever treasured up in the heart of the exalted Saviour, who is represented as ever willing and ready to bestow them upon the returning sinner. But, in the very natural order of things, it is impossible to receive them, to experience their power, or enjoy their blessedness, but under a deep sense of my need of them, in a believing application for them, and humble reliance upon him in whom alone they are laid up, and from *whom they are communicated*.

How, then, shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? Let neither the pleasures nor the engagements of the world turn away our attention, nor prevent our application, nor alienate our minds from this only Saviour. Beside his blood there is no other sacrifice for sin; and whatever the pride of man may set up in opposition, it will be found in the end a foundation of no value, it will leave the sinner unpardoned, unaccepted, to perish in his sins, with the still greater load of guilt in *rejecting God's salvation*. But whenever considering this wonderful subject, which angels desire to look into, may my heart be filled with admiring views of the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the engagement of the Holy Ghost; and stand astonished at the sovereign display of wisdom



and grace in the counsels of eternity, in devising so wonderful a plan for the ransom of guilty sinners.

If it claimed the gratitude and confidence of Israel of old, that the Lord had given Egypt for their ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for them; that since they had been precious in his sight they had been honourable, and he had loved them so as to give men for them, and people for their life; what gratitude, what confidence does he claim of redeemed sinners, whom he so loved as to give for them his only begotten Son? How shall we sufficiently adore the love and grace of Jesus, who gave himself, who gave his life, a ransom for us? Surely we must say with the Apostle, “ I account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” Our need as sinners is yet the same; his glory, his excellency, *so suitable to us, remain unchangeable*; and if, therefore, we had the same knowledge of him as the Apostle, we should entertain the same sentiments of FAITH, LOVE, and GRATITUDE. But, insensible of our state, or inattentive to it, we little realize his glories or his work, nor inquire sufficiently into its nature and consequences to be suitably affected by it. Though perishing without his ransom, we little admire the love that ransomed us, at so invaluable a price as his own precious blood.

Never, indeed, do we behold any of its glories, till He, to whom we are indebted for all, enlightens the mind by the influence of that Spirit which is in his hand, as the effect of his covenant work, and by which he prepares the heart, and renders it willing to receive and inclined to value the blessings which such grace alone could bestow. Alas! the depravity of guilty man, which renders him so insensible to that glory and mercy of the Saviour which thus overcomes and triumphs over his *insensibility and guilt*! When once inclined by his own grace to seek, he liberally bestows all the benefits and blessings of redeeming love! He, indeed, who has stooped so low, so emptied himself, so suffered to obtain them, how shall he not delight to communicate them to the objects of his ever-

lasting love? His office upon the throne is but to bring into effect all the purposes of his grace towards them, and bring them to himself in glory. For this he rules, for this he pleads. His intercession always *prevails, and his kingdom ruleth over all*. Blessed Jesus, we will plead the same at the throne of grace which thou art pleading at the throne of glory, and trust in thee to present and GIVE EFFECT TO OUR PRAYERS. Rejoicing in all the gracious effects of thy cross, with sin pardoned, righteousness imputed, grace communicated, victory ensured, deliverance wrought out from the power of every spiritual enemy, we will look forward to that time when thou shalt have ransomed us both body and soul from the power of death and the grave; to that season when the ransomed of the Lord shall all return to Sion with *everlasting songs of joy*. And though the present effects of thy redeeming love, in the enjoyment of thy people, may appear small in their degree, in comparison of the value of thy atoning blood, eternity shall discover its true value in the full enjoyment of those blessings which are suitable to its dignity, but which can never equal its infinity, and which, therefore, will be for ever bestowed, and for ever enjoyed, in the world of glory, and claim the tribute of eternal praise from all the vast multitude of RANSOMED SINNERS.

## ESSAY VIII.

**Resurrection.**

LIFE and death are the two great points of concern to mankind; the one the object of desire, the other of fearful apprehension. When looking forward for a moment to the gloomy region of the grave, the mind naturally recedes from the melancholy scene; the thought casts a gloom upon every earthly enjoyment, and clouds *every future prospect*; and, were this the final close, the end of all, the termination would be miserable indeed. Death is an awful scene in its mildest form: nature shudders at the expectation, and well it may; for man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, *and where is he?* To meet it with the idea of sinking from thence into nothing, is a melancholy prospect; but to meet it with the uncertainty of a future state, or with the apprehension of everlasting sorrows, is much more so: yet these are the apprehensions, the fears of nature, conscious of its sinful state; and against which neither nature nor reason hath provided, or can provide, any relief: the best motive which even reason or philosophy can afford for satisfaction under it is, that it is universal and inevitable.

No wonder, then, that men of the world, who see and enjoy no further than the things of sense with which they are surrounded, turn from it, willingly forget it, and endeavour by every possible means to prevent the recurrence of the thought. But why, then, does the Christian behold it with indifference, with calm solemnity, or with holy joy? Because he knows a remedy. Blessed be God, the Gospel opens the scene to faith, shows a glorious prospect



beyond the grave, gives the pledge, the earnest, the proof of its reality, and of our enjoyment. “I am the Resurrection and the Life,” said the dying Saviour. Believest thou this? Then there is a ground of support in the last melancholy trial of departing nature; then there is cause of joy and triumph in the closing scenes of a miserable, sinful, uncertain life; we may look at death with holy satisfaction, with heavenly consolation. My reader, may you and I know this Jesus, and the power of his resurrection! and *the benefit will be ours.*

There is something very suitable, absolutely necessary, most pleasing and encouraging, in this character of our adorable Redeemer. The expression by which it is represented is peculiarly comprehensive; not only will he raise himself, not only will he raise his people, but “I am the Resurrection.” So dependent is this wonderful and expected fact upon himself, and his own almighty power; so dependent the happy resurrection of all his people upon the character and office which he sustains, and the work he performed, that he is properly called “the Resurrection and the Life.” If we consider the subject in several points of view, they will separately and collectively afford us the most pleasing instruction, and the surest encouragement to faith, where most we need its superior energy, enabling us to triumph over the last great enemy, and to meet death and the grave with holy joy, through him who giveth us the victory.

The resurrection of a sinner is either to be considered as spiritual or natural; either of the soul from the death of sin, or the body from the grave: both of these imply a previous loss of that life which is to be restored. Nor is it possible to understand the Scripture without considering it as such; and such is the condition of man that both of these are rendered necessary. “In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die,” was the dreadful sentence which enforced the Divine command upon man in *paradise*, to ensure his obedience, and which was literally fulfilled the moment of his transgression; though not to its full extent

upon the body ; yet, which was infinitely more awful, upon his immortal soul, in which, from thence, he lost the Spirit of life, *and became dead to God* ; dead under sin, as exposed to guilt and condemnation ; and dead in sin and *surrendered to its destructive power*. Hence, he became what the Apostle describes him to be, “ dead in trespasses and sins.” (Eph. ii. 1.) This is always considered in Scripture as the affecting situation of fallen man ; and upon which all the designs and discoveries of its amazing grace are founded ; and yet the most affecting part of this his misery is, his natural *ignorance of its existence* : he is as spiritually ignorant of his spiritual death, as the man naturally dead is of his natural death. This however, if the state of one, must be the state of all mankind ; all descending from the same fallen parent, partaking of the same corruption, and all discovering its effect, though in different ways ; so that it is evident that “ ALL HAVE SINNED AND COME SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD.” Nor does the fatal contagion alone affect every man, but extends itself to every law of man ; so that by nature he is, in the sight of Infinite Purity, “ altogether as a corrupt thing.” Hence while alive to the world, discovering powers, faculties, and affections, suited to animal and rational life, the life of this world, he manifests himself dead to God, by discovering no such faculties or affections to the things of God and spiritual realities. The necessity, therefore, of a change is evident, which our Lord himself denominates, being “ BORN AGAIN,” “ BORN OF THE SPIRIT ;” and which the Apostle considers as the being made a partaker of “ THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS :” and, as this is the restoration of life which has been lost, it is most properly called A RESURRECTION. Nor shall any rise from the grave to glory but those who are made partakers of this FIRST RESURRECTION FROM SIN TO GOD.

But a day is coming, when those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake ; when the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, when the sea shall give up the



dead which are in it, and death and the grave shall deliver up the dead which are in them. The same sentence which rests upon the soul has confined the body to the grave: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return:" the decree must be fulfilled; thither it must descend and moulder into dust, perhaps be scattered abroad by the four winds of heaven: but He who has decreed its desolation, has decreed its rise: soon shall the scattered particles be collected, reformed, reanimated with the immortal Spirit; and the same body which is sown in the grave in corruption, be raised in incorruption, and endued with the power of an endless life. This is the doctrine which the New Testament revelation is peculiarly designed to teach and confirm, and in which its glory most eminently appears. And though this was the current faith of the church and all true believers from the beginning, without which they could never have acted as strangers and pilgrims on earth, yet life and immortality may well be said to be brought to light in the Gospel, because of the additional testimony and evidence which it has thence received.

These are the two different resurrections which the believer looks and waits for, and which he is taught by our Lord himself, when assuming this title, to consider as entirely dependent upon *himself, who is eminently* THE RESURRECTION. All our blessings are, indeed, dependent upon him; and if there be any thing glorious or desirable in our resurrection, it is because he hath opened the way, purchased the life, and obtained the blessings; and any resurrection independent of the Lord Jesus Christ, of his work, and his salvation, could not be the object of desire, as it must be a resurrection unto eternal death, and not to *endless life and glory*. The different ways in which he fulfils this important character, must render him precious to the faith of dying sinners.

(1.) *As the resurrection of his people*, he taught the doctrine in his life, and confirmed the fact by his own resurrection from the dead.—The ancient types, prophecies, and promises, under every previous dispensation of God to



man, hold forth this interesting doctrine; that while a dying Saviour was to be the foundation of pardon and acceptance, a rising Saviour should be the confirmation of our faith and hope. Of the types some were personal, others ceremonial; (*i. e.*) they rose from circumstances which took place in the life of certain persons, or were ceremonies appointed for that purpose by the great Lawgiver. Of the personal types, the figurative resurrection of Isaac, after he had been devoted to the slaughtering knife of his father for the three preceding days, upon the Mount Moriah, is the most evident and exact in its application. Our Lord himself has referred also to the deliverance of Jonah from the belly of the fish, after three days' interment, as it were, in that gloomy grave, as a designed emblem of his own *burial and resurrection*\*. The two most remarkable ceremonial types of this fact were in the cleansing of the leper, and the observances on the great day of atonement. In the first, two birds were to be prepared,—the one of which was to be killed in an earthen vessel, over running water, the emblem of his dying love; when the living bird, dipt in the blood of the bird which was killed, was afterwards let loose in the open field, and the leper was pronounced clean, representing, no doubt, the rising Redeemer breaking from the tomb, and through the virtue of his own blood, entering into the heavens, for the salvation of his people. (Lev. xiv. 4.) On the great day of atonement a similar observance took place: two goats were to be presented at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, one of which was to be offered for a sin-offering for the people, the blood of which was to be sprinkled upon (or, towards) the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat, and “when Aaron has made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle, &c. he shall bring the live goat; and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him

\* Among several other examples of the same nature may be observed that of Samson at Gaza.

all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat ; and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness : and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited ; and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness." (Lev. xvi. 7—10, 20, 22.) Here we recognize the very same design in both,—the atonement for sin in the Redeemer's blood, the justification of his people by his resurrection (Heb. ix. 12); and as without a miracle one offering could not designate both, therefore two are to be prepared and disposed of in different ways, as may properly represent to the faith of the believing Israelite these wonderful facts. In the express language of prophecy these circumstances are more clearly revealed : the first promise evidently predicted his dying love by the bruising of his heel, his resurrection by his bruising the serpent's head. He who was revealed to Abraham as his eminent Seed, but as the Blessing of all nations, must, doubtless, though a dying man as his descendant, be a living Saviour in order to bring a blessing. Hence he was to drink of the brook in the way, yet to lift up his head (Psa. cxiii. 7) ; to sink in the deep waters, but not be overwhelmed ; to descend into the grave, but not to see corruption (Psa. xvi) ; to make his soul an offering for sin, yet to see his seed and prolong his days (Isaiah xliii) ; and to swallow up death in victory (Isaiah xxv. 8) ; to ransom his people from the power of the grave, and to be the plague of death, and the destruction of the grave. (Hos. xiii. 14.) These are prophecies which cannot easily be misunderstood, nor can ever be interpreted but as respecting the resurrection of some one from the grave. Now, then, we see the prophecies turned into history, the predictions into fact. After the blessed Redeemer had repeatedly declared that he was to die and rise again, to raise up the temple of his body, which was to be thrown down, we see the fact take place. After lying three days and three nights, according to the Jewish method of reckoning,

i. e. part of three days and three nights, under the sentence of death, in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, he breaks the bands of death, the bars of the grave, and rises as the MIGHTY CONQUEROR. Though his sacred body is inclosed in the sepulchre, an enormous stone rolled to its door, and sealed for its security; though the Roman guards, with inexorable malice, watch the sacred place dignified with the body of Jesus; what are these to resist the truth of the promise, the faithfulness of the prophecy, and the power of the Almighty God. When sought for, "he is not here" (say adoring angels), "he is not here; he is risen as he said," &c.: and after appearing forty days amongst his disciples, frequently appearing to them to confirm their faith by the plainest evidence of their senses, He leads captivity captive, and ascends where he was before. O glorious Redeemer, thou art truly the Resurrection and the Life!

But this is more evident when considering him,

(2.) As *the author and source of the resurrection*, by HIS OWN ALMIGHTY POWER.—Without this he might have risen, but could not be THE RESURRECTION; he might have life, but could not be THE LIFE ITSELF: both of these must be united together, and none but he who has the principle of life in himself, who is the self-existent, and so the source of all life, can be the resurrection from death to life. Hence it is most remarkable, and worthy of our observation, that though the resurrection of the Redeemer is attributed to the Father and to the Holy Ghost, it is also attributed equally to himself; plainly implying the unity of the Three Persons in the Divine nature, in the Divine purpose and works; and the essential union of the Lord Jesus Christ in them all. Hence he declares, near the beginning of his ministry, "Destroy this temple, and in three days *I* will raise it up again" (John ii. 19); and more designedly near its close—"I lay down my life that I might take it again: no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John x. 17, 18): how



else, indeed, could he be the conqueror of these enemies of his church? but now the victory is his own\*.

The same glory must be attributed to the Redeemer in our resurrection, either from the death of sin or from the grave; as no man can quicken his own soul (Psa. xxii. 29), so it is alone the law of the *spirit of life* in Christ Jesus, which can make us free from the law of sin and death. This spirit is his own gift; and one of the designs of his exaltation upon the mediatorial throne is, to bestow that gift. “It is expedient for you (says he) that I go away; for, if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but, if I go away, I will send him unto you.” (John xvi. 7.) And since all spiritual life is dependent upon his influence, who is the gift of the exalted Redeemer, so the glory of it must be attributed to him in effecting this. His word and ministry are the general means, though the great agent is the Spirit of grace; and by his influence as true a change is produced in the spiritual world as shall take place in the general resurrection upon the natural; in the soul now, as then in the body. And this is the power of his resurrection, as it proceeds from the influence of the rising Saviour, and the power which he *hath thereby received*. Now they are truly quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins; brought from a state of death into a state of life, in which the sinner lives before God, as in his favour and acceptance; and is alive to God as partaker of the principle of spiritual life from him. This is absolutely necessary for a sinner; for, except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. This is, therefore, the most glorious part of his promise of victory over death and the grave, and evidently referred to by our Lord when he says—“He that believeth in me, though he were dead, *i. e.* IN SIN, YET SHALL HE LIVE; for he that hath the Son of God hath life:” he hath eternal life, everlasting life, begun in grace, to be consummated hereafter.

\* Many other passages might be adduced in which he is spoken of as the author of his own resurrection.

Thus the Apostle describes the change effected by the power of Divine grace ; that the believer, being buried with Christ, is also risen with him through the faith of the operation of God who raised him from the dead ; and being by nature dead in sin, and in the uncircumcision of his flesh, is quickened together with Christ (Col. ii. 12, 13). Planted, therefore, in the likeness of his death, he is also in the likeness of his resurrection ; and both as to principle and as to experience, he reckons himself to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. vi. 11.) This quickening is effected by the exceeding greatness of his power, according to the working of that mighty power which raised up Jesus from the dead. (Eph. i. 18, 19.) And yet, says the Apostle Peter (1 Pet. i. 21, 23), it is “by Him,” even Christ Jesus, that we “believe in God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, &c. ; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which LIVETH AND ABIDETH FOR EVER.”

He, therefore, is our life and our resurrection by the power of his quickening Spirit : so that every believer has the same experience as the Apostle ;—“I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.” (Gal. ii. 20.) And the Lord himself beautifully represents this truth and the manner in which the believer lives upon him, by comparing himself to bread, “the bread of life,” and the acts of faith as the receiving and eating this bread, which thus become the means of support to spiritual life, as the natural food sustains, by enlivening and invigorating, the body. (See John vi. 51—58.)

This view gives to the believer a ground of joy and confidence, since he who hath given himself as the spiritual life of his people, and hath raised them up by his grace to the enjoyment of that life, is still the food and the support of that life, and will doubtless, therefore, complete it in the full enjoyment of glory. Here we might dwell and enlarge our contemplation : it is a delightful subject to the

true believer, who knows and feels the experience of it ; and the more he enjoys it by faith, the more he discerns of the excellency and fulness of Christ Jesus, and the more he desires the communication of his grace ; more life, more liveliness ; and the more he exercises a simple dependence of faith on Jesus, who is the life, the more he receives the enlivening influence from him.—My reader, art thou risen with Christ ? Every believer, indeed, was virtually in him in the covenant of redeeming love : hence he is considered as in Christ, rising with him as an earnest and pledge of his own resurrection through grace, and is absolutely and irrevocably interested in all the effects of his resurrection. But the knowledge of this can only be obtained when the power of his resurrection is felt in the heart : and if this change hath taken place in our hearts, though once dead in sin, we are now alive to God ; though once under the power of iniquity and sin, our hearts are changed, renewed, re-born to the power of a spiritual life ; though once dead to spiritual things, we have now the knowledge of their reality, excellency, and importance ; have desires and affections suited to the life which we have received, and which are the sure signs and tokens of spiritual life, tending to its increase and perfection.

Do we know any thing of this ? If we do, then, no doubt, we shall lament that we have so little. But is it real ? There is a power proceeding from the risen Saviour, by his Spirit, which quickens all his people ; there is spiritual life, however low its exercises, which will never be satisfied *till it be perfected* : if risen with Christ, we shall seek those things which are above, and *be daily tending there* ; till Christ, who is our life, appear, and we appear with him in glory. (Col. iii. 1—4, &c.) Daily experience will teach us that in this life we are entirely dependent upon him ; that he is the principle, the source, the reviver, the preserver ; that we live upon him by faith, and live by him. This will render the Redeemer exceedingly precious. To him we shall direct our supplications, in the simplicity of dependence, as the Author and Finisher



of faith, till he complete and consummate all our hopes. Blessed be his Name, this he will do, and shew that he is the resurrection, when he shall raise his people from the grave. Both of these, the spiritual resurrection of the soul, and the certain resurrection of the body, are described together ; and our Lord argues from the one to the other, when he asserts, “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live ; for, as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself :” that this relates to the spiritual resurrection of his people from the death of sin, is evident by its being then actually taking place ; and by the reference to the natural resurrection which follows :—

“ Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” Hence, again uniting them, he asserts,—

“ This is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day : and this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life ; and I will raise him up at the last day. No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him ; and I will raise him up at the last day. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54.) What a glorious Redeemer ! What infinite power dwells in him ! What amazing blessings flow from him, and claim the faith, and excite the glorious expectations, of the believer ! His word is the word of power. Behold, “ thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust ; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.” (Isa. xxvi. 19.) Who can this be but Jehovah the Saviour, the Lord becoming our salvation ! He claims the title, the *I am*, and

fully justifies his right to it when he appears as the resurrection and the life.

Hence while in his person we notice him as its Author and its Source, in his engagement, and in the fulfilment of his mediatorial office, we acknowledge him,

(3.) *As the meritorious cause of the resurrection of his people.*—The first man, the first Adam, had forfeited his life, and the life of all his children, by transgression. The second Man, the second Adam, pays the forfeit, purchases the gift, or the right to bestow it: hence in his mediatorial character he speaks of his power to bestow life as the gift of the Father to him; “for as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.” (John v. 26; compare ver. 17—30.) As under sin, the sentence of death must have remained on guilty man. “We had (says the Apostle) the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.” (2 Cor. i. 9.) This is spiritually true of every child of Adam; this is the state in which the enlightened and convinced sinner feels himself placed: and the effect is the same; to annihilate all self-dependence as vain and delusive, and to lead the dying sinner out of himself to the power of a rising Saviour. He came to destroy the works of the devil, sin, and death, and to complete his triumph, he is represented as “conquering him that had the power of death—that is, the devil.” By the offering of his sacrifice for sin once for all, he removed the sentence, and fulfilled the covenant-terms of redemption. The Surety secured to himself the power of deliverance for the objects of his love, who were sealed up under the condemnation of death by the hand of Divine justice; and the authority to bestow his Spirit, which he, thereupon, as Mediator, received into his hands, as the Spirit of life and salvation. Thus he rests the life of his people upon his own: “Because I live, ye shall live also.” The dying Saviour, having paid the debt, and obtained eternal redemption for his people, as the rising Saviour, ever lives to put into effect all the purposes and designs of

covenant-love and mercy ; all the engagements which he has entered into on their behalf, and all the promises he has made to them ; and his life, therefore, becomes the ground and cause of life everlasting to his people. If he died that we might live, he lives to quicken, preserve, and bring his people to the full enjoyment of the purchased blessings. “ If, then, we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him, knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him ; for in that he died, he died unto sin once ; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God : ” “ for as the wages of sin is death, so the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. vi. 8—10, 23.)

Thus the life of the believer is “ hid (or, treasured up) with Christ in God ; ” and “ if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by his death, much more, being reconciled, we shall be (eternally) saved by his life ” (Rom. v. 10). The living Saviour will certainly accomplish what, as the dying Saviour, he obtained a right to effect ; and we may adore him as our resurrection and life, not only as having the power of both in his hands, but as having obtained the right to exercise it as Mediator, in bringing all his people from death, quickening them by the Spirit of life, and raising them, body and soul, to eternal glory. Thus we may live upon him in faith, and wait the perfection of his design and our expectation, in confidence upon his *power and faithful promise* ; for his resurrection as the Surety of his people is the pledge of theirs, and, being the first fruits from the dead, becomes the security of the general harvest.

If Enoch before the flood, and Elisha under the law, were translated that they should not see death, no doubt this took place in reference to the future victory of Messiah over death and the grave, which was then as certain in the Divine mind, as when actually accomplished ; just in the sense in which Christ is said to be the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Nor was their exalt-



ation to glory a resurrection, but a translation; nor can these form any exception to the general declaration, since He himself was the first that arose from the dead, and triumphed over the grave *by descending into it* \*.

Hence in allusion to the Jewish typical ordinance we are told, that “Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive: but every man in his own order; Christ the *first fruits*, afterwards they that are Christ’s at his coming.” (1 Cor. xv. 20—23.) An offering was to be made unto the Lord of the first fruits both of man and beast†; instead of the first of these, the Levites were appointed of the Lord‡; but the firstling of every beast was to be sacrificed, or, if not fit to be sacrificed, to be redeemed at a price§. This was to be the consecration of ALL THAT CAME AFTER. But this was not observable in the first fruits of the harvest: “Thou shalt offer for the meat-offering of thy first fruits green ears of corn dried by the fire, and corn beaten out of full ears.” This was to be offered with *oil and frankincense*, typical, as it related to themselves, of the *Spirit’s grace and the Saviour’s intercession*. (Lev. ii. 12—16.) Another very interesting ceremony upon the same occasion is described in Lev. xxiii. 10—14: “When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest unto the priest; and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it,” &c. Here the type must expressly concur with the great antitype in the time of its presentation, being on the first day of the week, the time of the *Saviour’s resurrection*. This was to

\* What became of their bodies we are not told: whether they were actually translated to glory, may therefore be uncertain; or like Moses buried by the Lord himself, that no one might know the place, and turn the circumstance into mystery, to which those ages were so prone.

† Exod. xxii. 29, 30.

‡ Num. iii. 12, 13; viii. 16; xl. 45.

§ Numb. xviii. 15, 16, &c.; compare Rev. xiv. 4.

be the consecration and the pledge of the future harvest. But from this morning they were to number fifty days, and then to bring out of their habitation two new loaves, as the first fruits unto the Lord. This was after the harvest was complete, and its fruits prepared for the use of man, as a consecration of the food thereby afforded; and it was on this day, the day of Pentecost, that the rising Redeemer, having obtained all his blessings for his people, gave the first fruits of those blessings to his church, and collected the first fruits of the Gospel-church unto himself, and presented them, as it were, to the Father, as the pledge of the full accomplishment of his will in the eternal salvation of all whom he had given him. (John vi. 39.)

From this typical ceremony we are directed under the Gospel to a more glorious design, and a more glorious event; of which these were faithful, though but faint, representations. We behold the victorious Redeemer rising from the dead in our nature, and in that nature first appearing in the presence of God for us, as the pledge of the resurrection harvest; the rising of all his people from the grave to the kingdom of glory. Though the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, yet shall it spring up, till the whole be gathered, as the corn into the floor, into the granary, even the KINGDOM OF OUR GOD. The power of his resurrection was soon manifested, and the pledge was followed, by some of its effects, as an increasing confirmation to our faith in the general harvest; when the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. (Matt. xxvii. 52.) So shall the earnest and the pledge be surely realized; he that raised up Jesus will raise up us also by Jesus, and where he is there shall also his people be.

The first fruits were also a pledge of a harvest of the same sort; so that in this view the resurrection of Jesus must be considered not only as the pledge, but as

(4) *The pattern of ours.*—If in this he appeared as

our Surety; if his resurrection secures ours; if we are to rise because he rose; if in this he is the first fruits and the pledge of ours; then our resurrection must be similar to his. How contrary, therefore, are their views to the general representations of Scripture, to its figurative allusions, or its declared facts, who deny the resurrection of the same body from the grave! Our resurrection cannot be like his, unless this be the case: for did not he reanimate the same body; the same that died upon the cross, fell into death, and lay buried in the grave? Was not this the case in the resurrection of those who rose immediately after him, *as the proof* of his mediatorial authority and all-sufficient power? Most certainly it was. In what sense besides could the Saviour be said to triumph over the grave, if the grave should be suffered to retain all that descends into it? The very term, indeed, of a resurrection, implies a falling down first; otherwise it might be a creation, but could never be a resurrection. The fact may be difficult to conceive of; but surely it ought not to be reckoned a thing incredible with us that God should raise the dead. He who brought the human frame out of nothing into existence, can certainly re-form it out of dust into superior glory. Let its particles be corrupted, crumbled into dust, mixed with common dust; let them pass through all the transmutations that imagination can conceive, let them be scattered with the wind, let every change take place in them that can confound the mind of man,—these shall not confound the knowledge and wisdom of God, the great Creator. He can still distinguish, recollect, re-form, re-animate, the same frame; and he who endued it with its present powers can bestow upon it immortality, and enlarge its powers of activity and enjoyment for eternity.

That this will be the case is evident from the whole analogy of Scripture: and because God has represented himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, since their bodies were in the grave, our Saviour himself argues the necessity of their resurrection; since, as he was the



God of their whole persons, their whole persons, body and soul, must so belong to him as to be preserved and glorified by him. The plain declarations of Scripture, indeed, confirm the doctrine. "I would not have you ignorant (says the Apostle) concerning them which are asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope; for, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so (i. e. *consequently*, if it may not even signify, *in like manner*), them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him;" "and the dead in Christ shall rise first." (1 Thess. iv. 13—18.) And when treating expressly upon the subject, the Apostle declares, "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:" adding, that *that* very body which was sown in corruption shall be raised in incorruption; that which was sown in dishonour shall be raised in glory; that which was sown in weakness shall be raised in power; that which was sown a natural body shall be *raised a spiritual body*. The subject of this resurrection is the same that was before sown in the grave; "*it is sown, it is raised.*" Nor can there be any beauty, or even meaning, in the contrast of corruption and incorruption, &c., unless they be applied to the VERY SAME MATTER. "This corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality." He, then, who is the Resurrection and the Life, will actually raise the sleeping dead, and bring the body out of the tomb, or wherever its scattered particles may be found, and fit the restored and reanimated frame for immortality and glory. Thus only death can be swallowed up in victory, and the grave lose its prey: it shall yield its victory over the dying body to the triumphant power of the Redeemer, when he brings his people out of it; when he changes death for endless life, and the grave for the kingdom of glory.

Upon this ground let the believer take his stand, and look forward with confidence. Behold in this rising Saviour the security of thy resurrection from the death of sin and the regions of the grave. Believing in Jesus, thou art interested in all his acts and triumphs; thou art

really rising with him to the favour and love of God, and the hope of glory: having undertaken thy cause, he directs thee to view him in the glories of his Divine power as thy almighty Saviour;—"Look unto me, and be ye saved; for I am God." Behold me, the great God thy Saviour; the self-existent Jehovah; he who hath life in himself is the resurrection and the life: upon him our help is laid, who is able to save to the uttermost.

Behold, then, in him, becoming Mediator and Surety, the meritorious cause of all my blessings. I was a dying sinner, under the sense and power of spiritual death; but through his death sin is done away, the atonement is paid, justice is satisfied, the ransom complete. But how can I know this? how can I be assured of its acceptance, and appreciate the enjoyment? I behold the evidence of it in his resurrection: the Surety is set at liberty; the debt, therefore, must be paid, the offender shall be discharged. I know that he has now finished the work of satisfaction; now obtained a legal acquittal for those for whom he answered; that he has finished the victory, and destroyed the power of *death and the grave*. When I come and plead his work, I may cheerfully trust my soul in his hands for eternal salvation. He, the living Saviour, pleads it for me, presents his perfected righteousness and redemption; and now there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. Through his conquest I shall conquer; since as for me he engaged my spiritual enemy, so for me he triumphed, that I might obtain and enjoy the fruits of his victory.

Lift up thine head, then, O believer! act as much as possible from love to him, and to his glory, in the work of the Lord; but believe that in him the work of redemption is complete: accept and trust in his free and all-sufficient work: never more unite any thing of thine own for thy justification and acceptance, since he arose for thy justification, and, having reconciled thee to God by his death, will save thee by his life. Justified from all things by faith in that almighty Saviour, rejoice in his fulness, and,

while serving him with all thine heart, glorify his Name and *trust his promise*. Thy Redeemer rose not like a common man, but as the Surety, and therefore, the Resurrection, of his people. Look forward, then, to the grave with peace and joy. It is, indeed, a gloomy prospect: nor are his people exempted from passing through the dreary passage. The dying pain, the parting pang, the gloomy grave, the decaying dust,—these are awful considerations! But as the Saviour passed, and passed through, he perfumed the darksome place, and overcoming the power of death triumphantly arose: “The breaker up is gone up before his people; they have broken up and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it; and their King shall pass before them, and Jehovah on the head of them.” (Mic. ii. 13.)

Fear not, then, O believer! he who knows the path has promised, “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” He who has gone through the gate into the eternal city, will lead thee through. The world may close on thy dying eyes, the voice of friends may withdraw from thy closing ears, and be no more heard for thy consolation. But then the voice of Jesus can reach the heart; then will it begin to be heard in its most reviving sound, when from the throne of his glory he bids thee “come up hither.” You are now going down to the grave; but be assured thy dust is his charge. Soon shall the last trumpet sound that shall awake the dead, and reach even thy sleeping dust.

Rejoice in hope, comfort thyself, comfort each other, O believers, with these words. He who hath obtained, prepared, and ascended in our nature to, his kingdom, will keep his people for it. If he be the Resurrection and the Life, “when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, then shall they also appear with him in glory.” Not only the immortal soul, but the once corruptible body, shall be



adapted to enjoy the felicity of his kingdom, and be both like himself for ever: for he shall even raise our vile body, and make it like unto his own glorious body, according to that mighty working of almighty power, whereby he is able, as Jehovah our Saviour, to subdue even all things unto himself.

## ESSAY IX.

**Tree of Life.**

AS the mind of man can form no ideas, but with regard to the objects of sense, the discovery of spiritual things can be made to him in no other way *than by allusion to sensible objects*. This mode of instruction, in the form of parable or allegory, therefore, has been generally the most engaging to mankind; and has formed the most agreeable mode of *conveying truth to the understanding and the heart*. “For the most important truths” (says an elegant writer) “make but a slight impression, unless they enter first as a picture in the imagination, and are thence stamped on the memory. Those which come nearest to sense are at present always the most powerful. Eloquence is that which persuades; and it persuades by moving: it moves by things and palpable ideas only; and hence, no eloquence is so perfect as that of the Scriptures, since the most spiritual and metaphysical things are there represented by sensible and lively images. This, no doubt, was the origin of hieroglyphics, the most ancient writing among mankind; whereby they transmitted their knowledge to future generations. On this account it has pleased God to deal with man from the beginning, in a way of emblematical or sacramental representation; in which mental ideas have been represented by outward forms, and spiritual things by material. It is highly probable that the ground of this was laid in the very first scenes to which man was introduced, in the constitution and arrangement of the Garden of Eden, that the whole of paradise was so ordered as to form a beautiful emblematical display of heavenly things,

and to lead the mind upward to spiritual realities; it is certain that the most eminent and remarkable objects there were so designed, especially the tree of life. Hence, it is scripturally considered (by a striking image) as bearing a resemblance to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is called by this name, in reference to the place he held in the constitution of Divine grace, in the church of God below, in the hearts of his people, in the benefits received from him, *and in his mediatorial glories and blessings in the church above.* While considering it in this light, may the figurative language of the prophet be sensibly fulfilled; and in holy contemplation and spiritual enjoyment, may we “sit under his shadow with great delight, *and his fruit be sweet unto our taste.*”

In order to enter into the analogy, it will be necessary to consider minutely the original circumstances, and *paradisiacal appointment.*

We are told in the inspired account of the original creation, “Out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food: the *tree of life* also in the midst of the garden.” It was evidently, therefore, a material tree, bearing fruit, pleasant to the sight, and proper for food; at the same time highly ornamental to that delightful enclosure in the centre of which it grew. The fruit of it, like that of the other trees, was doubtless suited to the support and continuance of animal life. The ancient Jews entertained an idea, that it possessed also medicinal qualities, and was an universal healer, calculated to preserve the LIFE OF MAN TO THE UTMOST. But whatever effects of this nature it might have upon his body, it had a higher use with regard to his soul. As the original life of man was both animal and spiritual, animal in his body, and spiritual in his soul, so both of these must require their proper supply and nourishment, and have their suitable perfections. Not only, then, was the tree of life calculated for the support of the animal frame, (for so were all the other trees of the garden,) but it was a sacramental way of stand-



ing before God, in the continuance and enjoyment of his favour. And the use of it implying an acknowledgment of entire dependence upon the great Creator, and a willingness to receive and enjoy life in his own way, was, no doubt, the mean to spiritual meditation, and of affording nourishment to the superior faculties of the immortal soul. It secured by an *absolute Divine appointment* the continuance of that spiritual life which he had received. And no doubt can be entertained, but that he who had originally given the “BREATH OF LIVES,” had a right to make its continuance rest upon whatever terms his sovereign wisdom thought proper. It seems, also, to have been an instituted symbol and pledge of a better life than even the Paradisiacal one, on which he was thus directed to place his affections, and to the enjoyment of which, after a suitable state of probation, it is probable (for where God hath not revealed, it does not become us to speak with certainty) he would have been by some means translated. Whether therefore it was to be eaten in common, or only at certain times, as a symbol and a sacrament of Divine and spiritual things, life in some way or other was connected with the eater of it; and his continuance in the state in which he was created, of perfect conformity to the Divine image, *and perfect enjoyment of the Divine favour*. This is all we know either certainly or probably of the matter; and since this way of living before God is now for ever cut off from fallen man, this is *all that we need to know*. The subject could afford us now no more than useless, though curious, speculation, were it not applied in figurative and prophetic language to represent the appointed way of salvation by Christ Jesus; and were it not calculated to lead us, in that mode *of instruction which is most suitable to man, by natural images to spiritual objects*. Hence the glories of Christ and the blessings of his salvation *are frequently represented under this allusion, in a way most suited to excite our attention, and engage our hearts*.

When the Prophet Ezekiel is representing the blessing

of the Gospel church, under the allegory of the wilderness country, rendered fertile by the streams of water issuing from the sanctuary, and increasing gradually into a mighty stream, waters that could not be passed over, he closes the description with the same beautiful allusion to the ever-verdant, ever-fruitful trees upon its bank; one of which is represented, by way of eminence, as “bringing forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.” (See Scott on Ezek. xvii. 22—24; and see Ezek. xlvii. 1—12.) “To him that overcometh (saith the Spirit to the churches) will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God:” which can be no otherwise fulfilled than in the full enjoyment of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the eternal blessings of his salvation. Hence he is more immediately described, under the same allusion; “in the midst of the street of the holy Jerusalem, and of either side of the river, was there the Tree of Life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse; but the Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him.” (Rev. xxii. 2, 3.) Hence they who do the commands of the Saviour are represented as having the right to (or rather, the power and privilege of) the Tree of Life. (See Rev. xxii. 14.)

In the everlasting covenant of grace and mercy, concerning fallen man, in the dispensations of grace towards him, the Lord Jesus Christ is appointed to hold the same place, and is now the reality of that of which this was the sacramental emblem in Paradise. Man having forfeited his right to these blessings, we are told, that, “lest he should (or, that he might not) put forth his hand and take of the Tree of Life, and eat and live for ever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth of the Garden of Eden,” &c. He drove out the man, having appointed another way of life and salvation to his fallen creatures, and placed

the cherubic representation there to guard the access (as in our translation, but rather, *to preserve the way*) to the Tree of Life; thus figuratively exhibiting, and discovering, that “God hath given to us eternal life (as his own free grant of mercy), and that (according to his own sovereign appointment) this life is (only) in his Son.” (1 John v. 11.)

Since, then, this way of life, and of coming near to God, has ceased, in the new covenant of redemption He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Hence in every dispensation He has been represented by those things which are the support of life;—under the Old Testament dispensation by the sacrifices, the paschal lamb, the manna, the shew-bread; under the New Testament, by the bread of God, the bread which cometh down from heaven, the bread of life, the water of life; and in the Christian church by the bread and wine, the sacramental elements, the emblems of his body and blood. And the inward exercises of the mind in believing, receiving, meditating upon, and digesting the truths and doctrines of Christianity, are represented by the corresponding actions; eating the bread, drinking the fruit of the vine, eating the hidden manna, and the *fruit of the tree of life*. Thus the same blessings are represented which Adam would have received in innocence from this sacramental tree, under the same allusion. And, excluded from the tree of life in Paradise, and the benefits of that covenant, we rejoice in the sovereign act of Divine mercy which has now provided a “better covenant, founded upon better promises;” which has made the rich provision for life and salvation in the covenant of grace, in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Fountain of life, the Life of our souls, the Living Bread, of which he that eateth shall live for ever.

Happy those who know this way of life and salvation, and who are thus daily coming near to God in him, in the ordinances of his church, and in the means of his grace! They enjoy the earnest and the pledge of those blessings



which they shall soon enjoy, in and from himself, without a figure, in the heavenly paradise above.

The views in which this allusion exhibits the person, character, and blessings of the Lord Jesus Christ are peculiarly engaging; while they are equally instructive and important; and will render a more minute attention to the several particulars included in it, highly gratifying to the believing mind. The primary idea in which all the rest are included seems to be this, that Jesus Christ, the great Redeemer and Mediator, is,

(1.) *In the covenant of redemption, God's only constituted mean of restoring life, and the only medium of continuing SPIRITUAL AND ETERNAL LIFE TO SINNERS:*

This was the principal design of the tree of life: it was both the sacramental symbol, and the instituted mean of life to man. Thereby God the Creator represented himself as the Sovereign Lord and absolute Proprietor of his creatures; as having a right to grant life, and to continue it, in whatever way and upon whatever terms he pleased. He called his creature to a constant sense of his dependence upon him, as living purely by his grace and his supporting power. When man, therefore, fell by his transgression, he rejected his terms of life; and as this way of life was intended only for this state, he immediately forfeited his right to partake of it. And having no longer life in himself, nor the means of continuing it according to the order of his original creation, he became subject to death, and could justly expect nothing but that death which the Creator had denounced upon his transgression; as the whole of that plan was for ever abrogated, it became an act of rebellion either to ATTEMPT OR TO EXPECT IT. His degenerate offspring, partaking of his nature and his guilt, have ever since been resting under the same condemnation; and, having no right to life under the original covenant with their first father, will in vain seek it in any method of human devising; since "as many as are under the works of the law, are under the curse." But

behold another *Tree of Life*! behold the great Restorer of life, in whom we have eternal life, and who (for this purpose) is “made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,” even all we need.

As in the original creation the Lord God manifested the sovereignty of his power, and, in the appointment which he then made, his sovereign authority; so here in the new creation, and in the appointment of the new covenant of mercy, he hath again manifested the sovereignty of his grace. While God has a sovereign right to determine the way in which he will bestow or continue his blessings, man can live only by God’s appointment. So we evidently discern it in the constitution of nature; and that man would be thought worse than insensible, who should hope to live without the use of those means of life which God has determined for its support. So it is equally in the constitution of grace. In his way is life; in the opposite (whatever it may be) is death. And if it were irrevocably so in the original constitution to our first parents, and if the first deviation from thence left the transgressor under the sentence, how much more certainly may we expect, under that better covenant in which all the wisdom, truth, and grace of God hath been manifested, that he who finally in unbelief and impenitence rejects God’s appointed Saviour, and seeks some other way of acceptance and salvation, should be awfully mistaken, and perish in his sins? Hence we are told, “In him was life, and the life was the light of men;” that Jesus is the life of his people; that he became such by his voluntary humiliation on our behalf; that he died that we might live; and that by thus bearing our death, he became the author of eternal life to as many as obey him. As our life is the purchase of his death, so is he exalted in our nature to bestow it; and is now the way to God, the truth, and the life. Jehovah-Christ, then, is the channel of all spiritual blessings.

In him, then, I stand before God with life and acceptance; in him a holy God beholds me with favour. In him

I am a partaker of life and salvation ; out of him I am under his curse and eternal condemnation. Hence he represents himself as “ the resurrection and the life ; ” “ and he that hath the Son of God hath life ; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” As a dying sinner, all I want is treasured up in Christ, for pardon, justification, and glory.

As the life grows up from the root into the branches, and there brings forth fruit, so all who are partakers of Christ, made alive by grace, shall live by him and live for ever ; though separate from him we can do nothing. Thus wisdom, emblematically representing the character of Christ, whose merchandise is better than the merchandise of silver, and her gain than fine gold, with length of days in her right hand, and in her left riches and honour, is described as the **TREE OF LIFE** to them that lay hold upon her. (Prov. iii. 13—18.) Blessings more than those which were forfeited by the transgression of the first covenant, are again enjoyed through the grace of the second covenant ; provided by, laid up in, and graciously bestowed from, our second glorious head, Christ Jesus, who is thereby the reality of all that was here figured, the true “ Tree of Life in the midst of the paradise of God.”

As the original tree of life was the only sacramental representation of, and mean of communicating, life from God, so now, since the first covenant is abolished, and the second covenant hath promised life and salvation only through Christ Jesus, never can these blessings come to man but from him ; but now, under the covenant of grace, man is admitted to these blessings, when, under a sense of his guilt and necessity, he is enabled to believe on the Son of God ; for “ whosoever believeth on him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.” And this is God’s constituted mean, that he may in every step magnify the riches of his grace ; for it is only of sovereign grace that we can ever have a right to the Tree of Life : “ therefore it is of faith that it may be by grace.”

An union with him by faith implies an interest in all that



he has done, and the enjoyment of all that he promises ; so that now the believer may say with the Apostle,—“ I LIVE, YET NOT I, BUT CHRIST LIVETH IN ME.” By faith we are admitted, upon the covenant of redemption, to taste the rich fruit of this heavenly Tree, the fruits of pardon, righteousness, peace, and grace, here, *and of certain glory hereafter*. But this is now our only way of access to God ;—“ for there is salvation in no other, neither any other name under heaven, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts iv. 12.) No sinner, therefore, must ever revert to the first covenant, or think of acquiring life by his own obedience. The attempt itself is criminal ; for a sinner to reject Christ, to seek some other way of access to God, is to ruin his soul and seal himself up under death and condemnation. “ In this case, (says the elegant and pious Bishop Horne), the rebel would claim promotion instead of suing for mercy. He would put his hand to the forbidden tree, which is no longer food for man. Its nature is changed with our condition : to the eye of pride it looks fair and tempting ; but its contents when eaten are ashes and sulphur : *life and immortality, without redemption, would prove the reverse of a blessing.*” This is now only to be found in Christ, who is our life, our way to God, our living food ; the foundation of our eternal hopes, AND THE FOUNTAIN OF EVERLASTING LIFE AND GLORY !

This, we observed, was the primary idea in which all the rest were included ; and, no doubt, this view is of primary importance to fallen man ; but when the foundation of our hopes is thus securely laid, by the riches of Divine grace in Christ Jesus, other views may engage our attention which tend still further to illustrate the subject, and excite the affections of our hearts to him ; so this allusion may be intended to set forth,

(2.) *The peculiar beauty of the person, and the pre-eminent glory, of the Lord Jesus Christ.*—Every situation in nature has its own peculiar beauties, and some one amongst them which rises superior to the rest, and constitutes its chief ornament ; so the principal beauty of the

field and garden consists in its tall and stately, or widely-spreading and fruitful trees. Thus the prophet Ezekiel figuratively describes the grand blessing of the New-Testament Church by a paradisiacal representation of, or allusion to, a fruitful place, where “by the banks of the river on this side and on that side shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed; it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary, and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.” The same occurs in similar language in the book of Revelation; but the most solemn description is given us by the prophet Daniel when using the figure to represent the dignity and glory of some mighty monarch, and the universal benefits of his equitable and extended empire. “I saw, and, behold! a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: the leaves thereof were fair; and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, *and all flesh was fed of it.*” (Dan. iv. 10—12.) We see here a tree rising nobly towards heaven, spreading abroad its branches, abundant in its foliage, bowed down with its fruits of all kind, affording a grateful shade, a secure retreat, abundant provision, constituting the ornament and felicity of the plains below. If this be a just emblem of the benefits of a wise, a powerful, and well-directed government, how much more suitable to represent the dignity and glory of him who is “**THE KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.**” It gives us, indeed, but a faint resemblance of his personal excellency, or the abundant excellency of his grace. In the glories of his Divine nature he shines upon his throne, and fills his church above. There, also, his mediatorial glories as Immanuel (God and Man) shine forth in their fullest lustre. He spreads the milder benefits and blessings of his grace

through his church below, and is thus the subject of everlasting wonder, adoration, and glory, to all his redeemed in heaven and earth. He is that wonderful Person that the eternal God delights to honour ; and in his person, work, and salvation, is most precious to them THAT BELIEVE. In the person of Jesus *the heart of God* (if I may so speak) *and of his believing people, meet : here they are united.* While angelic hosts join the adoration ; and when beholding all the glory of the Godhead shining in him, who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express *image* of his person, all acknowledge him as the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely ; the chief glory of his church below, and of the paradise of God above.

(3.) This beautiful emblem represents also the *fulness and variety of his blessings* ; being in the midst of the garden, where was the most easy access from all parts. The rich abundance may be denoted by the twelve manner of fruits. In some warmer climates, the fruits of the earth are produced and brought to maturity twice every year. But here the twelve manner of fruits produced month by month, each month completing one whole circle of revolving time, giving us the idea of abundance and variety. While their being brought forth every month, intimates that they are ever fresh, ever in beauty and maturity, and ever ready for USE AND ENJOYMENT. There is a similar idea in the Prophet Zechariah (chap. iv. 1—3, 11—14), where the all-sufficiency of Jesus, and the influence of his Spirit, are compared, not to vessels of oil, however capacious, but to two olive trees, which, with everlasting verdure and abundance from an ever-living root, empty their continual streams through the golden pipes to the seven lamps of his church with an unfailing supply. Hence, it is the consolation of the believing mind, that “in him all fulness dwells.” In the several situations of trial and temptation into which his people may be cast, he addresses them as he once did the Apostle, “My grace is sufficient for thee ;” and upon this



ground we are encouraged and commanded to “trust in him at all times,” who is “a present help in every time of need.” The variety of his blessings are just suited to the variety of our wants. The fruits that grow upon this Tree of Life are delicious to the taste of the penitent sinner, or the spiritually-minded believer, as they hang down to this lower world, and spread all around us, in the glorious Gospel of the grace of God. Now the believer discerns the suitable glory and excellency of the Divine Redeemer, while he enjoys from him the fruits of redeeming mercy, of justifying grace, sanctifying virtue, peace with God, and hope of everlasting glory. These are delightful to the eye of faith, pleasant to the spiritual taste, and nourishing and reviving to the believing heart. Now, in the means of his appointment, in the retirement of prayer, in the closet of meditation, in the reading of his word, or the various ordinances of his church, he realizes the fulness of the Saviour; in the exercise of that faith which is the “substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

Thus in Christ Jesus is treasured up every thing that a sinner can want, through the year of life always fresh and always new, continually growing, and which has supplied his church from the beginning, and shall supply it to the end of time. But a still more glorious prospect opens beyond, through him who hath brought life and immortality to light. The view of which enlivens and encourages the heart of the believer, consoling him in all the afflictions of life, or the fears of death.

O for faith to realize what the promises of God in Christ Jesus have described, the blessings stored in him; to live upon them through time; that then, this Saviour may be increasingly precious, till time is changed into eternity, and grace into glory! Then shall this Tree of Life ever flourish in the paradise above: itself, indeed, has always been the same from everlasting to everlasting; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. But then shall its glory stand fully revealed when faith is turned into

sight. Then shall its all-sufficiency to the wants and desires of the renewed soul be fully manifested; then shall the glorified believer be admitted to the full enjoyment of all its ripest fruits, the fruits of glory, through the countless ages of eternity. Oh, that we may be admitted to behold, to taste, *and enjoy them there!*

(4.) This allusion is most evidently designed to denote *the healing influences of his grace.*—In the description which is given us by the Prophet Ezekiel, we are told, “the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.” It not only supplies rich abundance and variety of provision, but affords the universal restorative for the diseases of the mind: “The leaves of the tree (says another sacred writer) were for the healing of the nations.” This is, no doubt, attributed to the leaf, to give us a more exalted idea of the value and amazing virtue of this tree of life, when its healing quality is diffused through its very leaves. Hence distils that balm of Gilead of which the Prophet speaks. Every part is full of sanative juice, and adapted to every disease of sin. In the garden and the field the providence of God has wisely and graciously distributed to every herb and tree its proper and peculiar quality. The skilful botanist classes their genus and species, investigates their different powers, their simple or compounded virtues, and finds spread all around him, by the indulgent hand of the great Creator, the distinct and specific remedy *for the diseases of the human frame.* He combines them and proves their efficacy in the removal of diseases. And yet, alas! here especially, he has to lament their insufficiency, and is often compelled to administer those things which by their opposite effect resist and impede the influence of each other; till some disease baffles the skill of the wisest practitioner, eludes the influence of the most efficacious remedies, and destroys the powers which retained the spark of life in a body of mouldering clay. The idea of universal and infallible remedies for all complaints, has long been considered as

an absurdity ; and that which pretends to come the nearest to it, is generally the object of derision, and is most to *be suspected of deceit or danger*. But here an universal panacea is no absurdity, no object of derision or suspicion: the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin ; his righteousness justifies from all things ; his grace creates the heart anew to everlasting life and a glorious immortality. It is the design of this Tree of Life to be *the life of men* ; to communicate a healing virtue, a renewing influence, to all the powers of the soul ; and those principles of spiritual life which by his grace shall become eternal.

Whatever, therefore, be our state as dying sinners, the word of truth assures us of an effectual remedy in the love and mercy of the Redeemer ; that our sins can never be too numerous for the virtue of his blood and righteousness, too powerful for the influences of his grace, or too inveterate for the omnipotency of his arm. Let the guilty penitent come to him with every disease that a convicted and contrite heart discovers, and he shall find the *sovereign balm for every wound* ; the infinitely efficacious and universal remedy, *to restore his afflicted spirit*. In this view the Psalmist beheld and triumphed in his grace ;—“ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits ; who forgiveth all *thine iniquities*, and *healeth all thy diseases* ; who redeemeth thy life from destruction, *who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies* ; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the *eagle's*.” (Psa. ciii. 1—4.)

If these are the effects of its influence on earth, (which, if I may so speak, is not its native soil,) how much more glorious the influence which it diffuses where above it flourishes in native and eternal vigour ! There shall be perfect healing ; every imperfection, every corruption, and, therefore, every complaint, and every sorrow shall be removed from those who have lived on earth by the faith of the Son of God, and are brought through to live with him



in glory. "The happy inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick; for the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."

Finally: *The perpetuity of his blessings* is represented by the place in which they flourish; not in the paradise on earth, but the paradise of God above; beyond the changing scenes of this life, the destroying storm, the blasting wind, and the various accidents of this unsatisfying world. There they grow uninjured, undisturbed, ever fruitful, ever new, on this side and on that side of the river which maketh glad the city of our God. Oh, happy state! what fruits shall his redeemed people who have loved and served him on earth then gather from the everlasting love of Christ, the Tree of Life, yielding its still ripening fruits of glory upon its ever verdant branches, rich, ripe, and eternal: the redeemed of the Lord shall behold and enjoy them, *with complete satisfaction, for ever.*

Glorious prospect to the now believing mind! Whatever this earth may be, there is a paradise above, where Jesus is the centre of all delight and enjoyment. Where there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true." (Rev. xxii. 3—6.) Here the effects of sin are yet to be felt, even where the guilt of sin has been removed by faith in Jesus, and the enjoyment of his grace. Clouds and darkness, storms and tempests, disturb this unfriendly climate; unfriendly, indeed, to the best interest of man. But there is beyond the paradise of God, and they that enter into it shall go out no more. Not like the earthly paradise, where the right to the tree of life was soon forfeited. Here he himself has secured the eternal enjoyment: the right of faith to taste it on earth, and of the redeemed to enjoy it in glory, was purchased dearly

by himself; by his obedience and sufferings even unto death; by his blood and righteousness; by his complete work of redemption upon the cross. There he fulfilled the terms of life for sinful dying man; and the gift is freely bestowed upon those who, feeling they are dying without it, are willing to receive it in faith. “For this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, **AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON.**” Treasured up in him he lives to bestow all the blessings of salvation upon his people; for them he obtained, upon them he will bestow, and **THAT FOR EVER.** His promise is faithfulness itself: “I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands.”

Let us, then, adore the glory, admire the grace, and wonder at the condescension, of the Redeemer; perfectly satisfied by the testimony of Divine truth, that all the blessings we can need are in him for life and salvation. Without an interest in them, indeed, the mere knowledge of their existence will be of no advantage to us, nor can we ever receive them, but when, under the exercise of genuine repentance, humbled for sin, we feel our need; and when, in the exercise of faith, and in the prayer of faith, we seek them **ALONE OUT OF HIS FULNESS.** To the penitent and believing sinner he freely gives, nor ever denies his blessings; and however glorious in themselves, beyond our merit, deserts, or hopes, we need not hesitate to expect what God has not refused to promise, when seeking it in the way in which he has *engaged to bestow it.* From the pardon of sin to everlasting life and glory all, all are the purchase of the dying Saviour, are treasured up in the exalted Saviour, are promised through him by a faithful God to every penitent and believing sinner!

This is the certainty of the Gospel, the ground of faith and hope; and when all human help below deserts us, when all ground of confidence beside shall fail us, **THE BELIVER MAY “GLORY IN THE LORD.”** Never can we sufficiently glorify him, to whom we are indebted for all the present blessings of grace, and all the hopes of glory.

If we were living in the realizing views of faith, the glorious prospect would often lift our heart above the world. Its general effect would be to wean us from earth, and render the highest felicity of sense mean and contemptible in the comparison. Living upon Jesus, his love would purify our hearts. "He that hath this hope in him (says the Apostle) will purify himself, even as he is pure." In lively faith our hearts would now be formed more decidedly to the enjoyment of his love; our confidence would rest with calm solemnity upon him; our hopes rise into holy joy; waiting through every scene of life for that glory which shall be revealed at the coming of Jesus, *who is our life*, for the fruit of the Tree of Life, the joy of the heavenly paradise.

We should be ready to say, in the elegant language of the pious prelate to whom we before alluded, "To whom, blessed Jesus, should we go, but unto thee? Thou art the Tree of Life in the midst of the paradise of God. For us, and for our salvation, thou didst condescend to be planted in a lowly form upon earth; but thy head soon reached to the heavens, and thy branches to the ends of the earth; thy head crowned with glory, thy branches the branches of honour and renown. Medicinal are thy leaves to heal every malady, thy fruits are all the blessings of immortality. It is our hope, our support, our comfort, and all our joy to reflect, that, wearied with the labour, and worn out with the cares and sorrows of a fallen world, we shall sit down under thy shadow with great delight, and thy fruit shall be sweet to our taste."



## ESSAY X.

**Crown of Glory—Diadem of Beauty.**

THE distinct prophecy in which this allusion is found begins with an account of the destruction of Samaria, the capital of the Israelitish kingdom. The goodness of God, the crown of their glory, was now become to them the crown of pride, and therefore the prophet denounces a woe upon it: Their pridesh all be abased, their fat valleys which, by their fertility, were the glory of the land of Canaan, their harvests and vintages which were the glorious beauty on the head of those valleys, were to become as the fading flower, and to be ravaged and laid waste by the destroying army. But in judgment our God, as usual, remembers mercy: a small remnant was to be spared, who should find in him more than they had lost of an earthly nature in the general desolation. (See Isa. xxviii.)

It is, indeed, highly probable that the prophet here turns to the remnant of Judah, who, being but a small number in comparison of the Israelitish nation at large, might begin to fear when they saw the general destruction of the nation, and the storm approaching so near to them. But the Lord encourages their hope; he himself would be to the residue of his people, in his mercy, what they had lost in his judgment. The promise, therefore, is declared in the same language as the denunciation, “Woe to the crown of pride” (ver. 1); but I will be “a crown of glory” (ver. 5); “the glorious beauty shall be as a fading flower” (ver. 4); but I will be “a diadem of beauty unto the residue of my people” (ver. 5).

Such is the case, also, with his church now: they are

but a small remnant in the earth, subject to the same trials, losses, and distresses as others; but if they know their true privilege, this is their consolation, that they possess all in him. He will make up whatever earthly losses they may sustain by his presence and favour; for the absence of all earthly glory, by becoming himself their glory and their honour. He will be better to them than all that the world enjoy; and when the world are deprived of their enjoyments, he will remain the same. Possessing Christ, they possess all in him; all things are yours, for ye are Christ's; and in him they possess UNCHANGEABLY AND FOR EVER. The Chaldee Paraphrast has evidently referred it to Christ, by rendering it,—“In that day Messiah shall be a crown of glory,” &c. So that it seems to have been originally understood as applicable to him, and as such we shall consider it. Such He really is, such may our faith behold him: then we shall “account all but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord;” and now, living in the realizing enjoyment of this, the various changes of earth will but little affect our minds. Christ my all, my beauty, and my glory, with a mind suitable to the enjoyment of him, and fixed upon him, will lead me to rejoice in all; and though kingdoms be moved, and the earth dissolved, he will still remain the same, the same in himself, the same to me, TILL TIME IS NO MORE.

The character under which he is here represented implies the honour that he puts upon his people, and the beauty which he communicates to them. When he took them as the gift of his Father in the counsels of everlasting love, then he engaged to become to them, and to obtain for them, whatever was needful for their deliverance from guilt, and their restoration to happiness and glory. In his work of condescension by the cross, he fulfilled his engagement; and, according to the covenant terms, he purchased his people to himself, and the blessings of grace and glory for them. Thus he obtained a mediatorial right to become all this to them, and to bestow all these blessings upon them. This was the work for which he came into the

world in the nature of his brethren : this was the design in all which he endured ; this the design in his infant cries, his accumulated sorrows, his voluntary poverty, contempt, and disgrace, the wounding of his very soul in the garden of Gethsemane, the bitter agonies, the desertion, the atoning sacrifice of the cross : these were but the price of our redemption, the terms of his mediatorial acceptance and glory, and in which he obtained the authority to bestow his blessings. Then “ he gave himself for his church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water, by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish ;” and in consequence of this “ he obtained power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as God the Father had given him.” (Eph. v. 25–27 ; John xvii. 2.)

Let us, then, meditate a little upon *the honour that* in the use of his mediatorial power and authority, *he puts upon* them.—It is evident at first sight, that this is not the honour of the world : these are not what he has promised ; these are not what his people expect, nor, when taught by his grace, what their hearts supremely desire. They are instructed to expect a happiness distinct from, and independent of, all that the world can either give or take away. In estimating their state, therefore, we must not judge according to the outward appearance ; for in this respect we know neither love nor hatred, we can neither distinguish the objects of God’s special love, nor the objects of his eternal indignation, by any of his dispensations under the sun. Precious in the sight of the Lord are his saints in life, precious in death : their bodies and their souls are dear in his sight ; and their very sleeping dust is the object of his special care ; and yet, if in this world only they had hope in Christ, they might oftentimes be considered, with relation to external circumstances, as *of all men most miserable*.

If we look upon their outward appearance, it is not such



as is calculated to attract the attention of men. To the poor the Gospel is preached; and they, as to the general effect, are the persons who receive it. It is the poor in this world who are, comparatively, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom. In general his people have not much of this world to glory in; or, if so, inward trials, if not outward, are often necessary to bring their minds to a due estimation of its emptiness and vanity: but much oftener we see them surrounded with poverty, treated with contempt, depressed with trials and afflictions, and always more or less subjected to temptations. Present appearances, therefore, can be no criterion of the state of man before God. Let not, then, the afflicted or tempted believer indulge gloomy apprehensions, either from the dispensations of Providence around him, or the fiery assault of temptation within; since such has been the state and circumstance of the generality of God's people. (1 Pet. v. 6—10.) He who could easily have bestowed all the power or honours of the world, has generally denied them to the objects of his everlasting love; and must therefore have seen good reasons for the withholding them. But he will be ultimately glorified in all his saints, in all his dispensations towards them, as well as in the eternal blessings bestowed upon them. (Eph. iii.)

But though he denies them the glories of earth, he does and will put an honour upon them, an honour of an infinitely higher kind—an honour for which they may well be satisfied to forego all the glories of earth, and wait a future time for the full manifestation and the complete enjoyment. He will be to them “*a crown of glory.*” Crowns are the alone property of kings. To wear a crown is esteemed the highest honour upon earth; but his favour will exalt them to a higher rank, a more elevated dignity, when he makes them kings and priests unto God, and they shall reign with him for ever. He himself is alone the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, upon his eternal throne; and upon his head are the many crowns, all the honours of the natural, spiritual, and eternal world. But

where he is, there shall his people be; in those same mansions of light and glory which he has prepared for them; and to them will he give the crown of righteousness which fadeth not away.

This belongs to them in consequence of that union, into which they are brought with himself; here begin all their excellencies, their honour, and their glory. Set up from everlasting as the Head of his church, they are frequently considered as composing his mystical body; and as each member of the body must partake in its measure of the honours of the head, so must his people of all those honours which their exalted Redeemer hath obtained. When made partakers of his Spirit, they are effectually called, sanctified, and separated from the world: then they enter into a real vital union with himself: he takes them near, or rather brings them into, himself by a bond never to be broken: “He becomes one with them, and they with him: he dwells in them, and they in him;” and faith pleads and glories in the real, though mystical, relation. Hence they are beheld by God only as in him, and therefore with the same love as himself;—“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me” (John xvii. 23): therefore, “the glory which thou hast given me (says the blessed Jesus), *I have given them.*” (ver. 22.) By this mystical union with the only begotten Son of God, they become children also. “Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus:” they become sons, who are also heirs, who have a right and title to the inheritance, with and through himself. “If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ;” that “if so be that they suffer with him, they may be also glorified together.” (Rom. viii. 16, 17.) By the same spiritual union they become spiritual kings, as well as priests to God: they shall finally be victorious over all their lusts, and all their enemies; and when the Lord beautifies the meek with salvation, then shall the saints be joyful in glory, and sing aloud.



When rising from the bed of death, then shall be spiritually fulfilled the declaration of the Psalmist, in the only sense in which it can be fulfilled, or in which its fulfilment is discernible to the people of God; then shall the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword of the Spirit in their hand, to execute vengeance on the heathen, and punishment upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles in fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written, to overcome and subdue all their strongest corruptions or most inveterate enemies; for “*this honour have all his saints.*” We have their triumphant song, in which they render back all the glory to him to whom it is due as the Author of all their victory: they “sing a new song, saying, Thou art worthy; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.”

What honours are these! But soon shall his saints come into the possession of them all, when he shall acknowledge them before the Father;—“Behold me, and the children whom thou hast given me.” Then shall the scene be changed; worldly joys shall cease in sorrow, and gloomy sorrow terminate in everlasting joy: “then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him,” &c. “And they shall say within themselves, We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour.” (See Wisdom v. 1—4.) Kings and nobles who have not known the Lord shall then be ashamed and eternally confounded, when those who were once accounted beggars in the midst of sin and death, shall be exalted to the throne of glory. How awful, how sublime, the contrast which the inspired writer hath drawn! On the one hand, “the kings of the earth and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man and every free man, (not because they were kings, or great, or noble, but because they had neglected the great salvation, and rejected the



only Saviour,) hid themselves in the dens, and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb ! for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand ?” But behold, on the other hand, “ the great multitude which no man can number, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, (high and low, rich and poor,) out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, crying with a loud voice, Salvation unto our God which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb : they are before the throne of God ; they serve him day and night in his temple ; and he that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them : they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Compare Rev. vi. 15—17 ; and vii. 9—17.)

Oh, how desirable to know Christ, to belong to him, to be vitally united with him, to be in him by faith, to be found at last in him ! Infinite in his own glory, these are the glories which he designs for his people ; and while he is able, through his infinite power and absolute authority, to accomplish his design, his infinite grace and unchangeable faithfulness secure that not one of them shall be lost ; not one of them deprived of all that glory which he has designed for them. Let me, then, esteem all but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; and however poor in nature or in grace, however unworthy and polluted, let me not fear that he will be true and faithful, especially since my poverty will more magnify his riches, my unworthiness his grace, my weakness his power, my natural instability his faithfulness, and my wretchedness his glory.

These views are well calculated to comfort the believer,

though cast into circumstances of poverty and distress, or to console the mind amidst bereavements and earthly losses. And when its riches and honours take to themselves wings and flee away, surely the believer has not to learn where his true riches and where his permanent honours are alone placed : he needs not to be told, that he is but a stranger and pilgrim upon earth ; that he is travelling through an enemy's land, but his Father's house is above ; that there his gracious relationship shall be acknowledged, and the eternal inheritance be possessed ; that there the Lord his Redeemer reigns as Head over all things ; that he is now his life, his light, and his portion, and will be his glory and his eternal salvation. If poor on earth, remember, believer, thou art rich in him, rich in faith and grace, and therefore rich in hope and expectation. If disappointments attend thy path, if earthly comforts fail, if earthly possessions are lost, you can never lose your eternal inheritance and portion. " The Portion of Jacob is not like them ; for he (the Lord) is the Former of all things, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance." If now afflicted, persecuted, and despised, for the sake of Christ, how much more striking will be the change when he shall honour thee, and acknowledge thee as his own ! and those that honour him he will honour.

We may always observe that the characters of Christ are suited to the person to whom in that character he is proposed. So it is here : " In that day," in the time of general calamity, when the crown is fallen, he will be for " a crown of glory : " in the time of need and trial his glories are discerned ; then he becomes most precious, and then he will peculiarly manifest that preciousness to his people. Look forward, then, O believer ! like Moses of old ; who, when cast out of Egypt, could account the reproach of Christ greater riches than all its treasures ; because he had respect to the recompense of reward. (Heb. xi. *passim*.) The word of the Lord presents the same objects, the same promises, to thy view ; and the same faith will teach the same lesson of deadness to the world, *and holy expectation be-*

*yond.* Learn, then, to treasure up all your happiness in him ; and, whatever you may possess on earth, to account him alone your portion. Without him all the world will be as nothing in the time of trial, but then will be the season that proves his excellency : in him you will even then have sufficient glory and honour. Remember his character, his fulness, his grace, his promise, and be confident. Though it does not yet appear what you shall be, soon it shall appear that all things are yours, life or death, things present or things to come, since you are Christ's, and Christ is God's ; and in him you shall have all you want in time *and for eternity*.

But a Crown and Diadem are beautiful ornaments ; so he is called the *Diadem of Beauty* to his people, to denote the beauty which he communicates to them, or with which he clothes them. The spiritual glory and beauty of his church is frequently represented by the same allusion : in the book of Revelation the splendour of the new Jerusalem is thus described, as having the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone most precious ; her walls of Jasper ; the city of pure gold like unto clear glass ; the foundations garnished with all manner of precious stones, and the gate of pearls. Under the same allusion the Lord administers comfort to his afflicted people tossed with tempests and not comforted : “ Behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and thy foundations with sapphires ; and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.” (Isa. liv. 11, 12, &c.) These are what men esteem so valuable, and are, therefore, used to shew the excellency of those blessings which the Lord will bestow upon his people, in accommodation to the views of men, though but low and mean images of that glory which he has laid up for them.

In the spiritual world sin alone is pollution and deformity ; wisdom, righteousness, and holiness, the only beauty and excellency. His people, like others, are by nature involved in all the ruins of the fall, defiled with all the corruptions of nature, and depravity of heart ; and



have their conversation in the lusts of the flesh, till he who has taken them for himself in the counsels of everlasting love, brings them back effectually to himself by *the power of his grace*. Then he washes and cleanses them by his blood and Spirit; his blood cleanses them from all sin, his Spirit purifies them by the washing of regeneration; he clothes and adorns them with his spotless robe of righteousness, and thus fits them to become the objects of his everlasting delight. What he puts upon them he loves to view; what he makes them, that they are in his eyes; and what the blessed Redeemer becomes to them, such he makes them to appear in the sight of God: thus the value he puts upon them is represented as the same, and by the same allusion, as the dignity he confers, if he be their Crown of glory and Diadem of beauty: "Thou also," says he, "shalt be a crown of glory, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." (Isa. lxii. 1—3.)

But if they become thus beautiful and glorious, it is because all things lovely, desirable, and comely, are in him, because he is all beauty and glory; and from their union with him they derive out of his fulness whatever they are that is good or valuable in the eyes of a holy God. Jesus alone is that to them, their wisdom, their righteousness, their sanctification, and their redemption; their all and in all; they are complete in him, and comely in that comeliness which he puts upon them. (See Ezek. xvi.) He, in his Divine and mediatorial person, is the perfection of all excellency, the glory of heaven and earth: in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead. He is, therefore, represented by every glory in nature singly, and in him they are all combined; but it is our felicity to view this fulness in him, not only as absolutely and essentially his own, but as deposited in him as the Surety and Mediator, the Friend of his people, that he may be their Fountain of supply. If, then, in him are laid up all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, he is my wisdom to guide me safe: if he is the Righteous One, he is the Lord my righteousness for my justification; if he is almighty, he is

my strength, that he may be the rock of my salvation : if he is the Holy One, he is my sanctification, the fountain of renewing grace: if he reigns in glory, I shall reign through him, who hath all power in heaven and in earth, that he may give eternal life to his people, who is the **HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO HIS CHURCH.**

Glorious Jesus, thou Friend of sinners, all my fresh springs are in thee ! Thou art the infinite Fountain ; and grace unceasing is ever flowing out of thy fulness for the calling, sanctification, consolation, and salvation of thy church and people. All the beauty in which his saints shine before God, is derived from the covering with which he adorns them ; that robe of righteousness in which the Apostle describes them as becoming the *righteousness of God in him*. This is his free gift, and their glory and rejoicing. Thus the church is represented as triumphing in it: “ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord ; my soul shall be joyful in my God ; for he hath clothed me with the garment of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.” (Isa. lxi. 10.)

But if he thus renders them glorious in the sight of God, he adorns them also before men, by his converting and sanctifying grace, turning them from these hateful vices, sins, and lusts, which defile the actions of mankind, that pollution which is in the world through lust, and clothing them with the graces of his Spirit. These form the essential character of that new nature which he imparts to them, and are what they in that renewed nature are continually aiming more and more to attain. The Apostle has contrasted these things in a most striking manner, and has placed, on one side, those vices so inimical to the happiness of man,—adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and all their train of consequent evils ; and, on the other, the amiable



graces and fruits of the Spirit,—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; the one he asserts the believer has crucified, has devoted to destruction, while, in the other, *he lives and walks in his daily practice.*

Thus, while the king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold; *i. e.* by the ornamental graces of the Holy Spirit. In this the Redeemer shone in human nature in the perfection of beauty: it is the desire of his people to be more like him, and to arm themselves with the same mind in *ceasing from sin*: and there certainly is a beauty in the power of his grace, a beauty of holiness, which, though men may affect to despise it in his saints, does secretly command their *veneration and respect*. Were it more evident in the life and conduct of professors, it might indeed excite the enmity, but would excite the involuntary approbation of all around. Here, alas! the best of saints will acknowledge their deficiency; and it is their daily prayer for grace to grow up more into the image of their Lord. Truly, it does not yet appear what they shall be, but soon shall he present them, holy and unblameable, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, in full glory like himself, in the full dress of the robe of his righteousness, and perfectly conformed to his image, before the throne; for they shall be with him, and like him, for ever. Then, indeed, he shall be the Crown of glory, and Diadem of beauty, to the residue of his people.

In the mean while, faith derives the constant communication out of his fulness: this is the authorized channel of their conveyance. His people, united to him in the covenant of redeeming love from eternity, are experimentally united to him by the gift of his Spirit, whereby he dwells in them, and they in him: in the fulfilment of his office he communicates the gift of faith, whereby they discover their own emptiness and necessity, and are led to apply, in humble dependence, to the only fountain of supply. The same faith that brings them first to Jesus, is the principle of their future life: they live by Christ living in them; and



thus “ the life they live in the flesh, they live by the faith of the Son of God ;” while it is from his fulness alone they receive every blessing and every grace. This is the daily exercise of the believer, and according as they are enabled thus to do, and the more they practically live by faith in Jesus, so the more their love, their peace, their joy, their thankfulness will abound, the more those graces which constitute the Christian beauty will be strengthened, and the more will they be conformed to the image of their Lord.

Such an union to Christ is the only mean whereby a guilty sinner, miserable and polluted in himself, can ever appear honourable and glorious in the sight of God, or ever become fruitful in the works of righteousness. Love is the fruit and effect of faith; nor can it ever exist without it, any more than the branch or the fruit of a tree without the trunk. All good works are the fruit of love, and, without this vital principle, any works of righteousness, however splendid, are but dead works, the works of a corrupt nature: all professions and forms, or the strictest adherence to rites and ceremonies, without this, are but the poor shadows of Christianity, having no living principle or spring in the heart: but both faith and love are the gift of his Spirit, from whom alone the communication of spiritual honour and grace proceed; and as they lead to union with Christ, so by that experimental union they are supported, maintained, and encouraged. Whatever glories or excellencies, therefore, the believer enjoys, they were the purchase of the Redeemer’s cross: in him they are treasured up: he communicates them together with the gift of his Spirit, whereby the regenerate and sanctified heart is enabled to exercise faith in him, working by love, and producing the fruits of *cheerful obedience*. But as they derive all from him in the exercise of faith now, this shall be more evident in the eternal world, when they dwell in his more immediate presence; for then he shall welcome them to his kingdom, and with his own hands put the crown of glory and the diadem of beauty upon

their head from his throne of glory. Then shall the new Jerusalem be prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, having the glory of God upon her ; described, in accommodation to our weakness, with all the glories of earth combined ; when they shall have no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb shall be the light thereof. (See Rev. xxi. 10—27.)

How mistaken, then, are the views and pursuits of the world ! how deceived their notions of glory and of honour ! When the humble Jesus appeared in condescension upon earth, the Jews could discern in him no beauty why he should be desired. Such has been the opinion of the self-righteous, the sensual, and earthly-minded, ever since, both of his person and his blessings. Instead, therefore, of accounting all things but loss for Christ, how constantly do the generality of mankind desire any thing *rather than Christ*, and prefer every thing to him ! “ *Lovest thou me,*” is a most trying question ; and, when truly answered, will determine our state before God. Earthly riches and earthly glories are but the faint image, the transitory shadow, of those true riches that are in him, of those eternal glories which flow from him, which all his people enjoy in him, and shall enjoy with him in his own eternal kingdom. Let me learn, then, to value this above all things ; let it be my chief desire to shine in his lustre, in the robe of his righteousness, and the ornament of his Divine graces. If I want in the ornaments of clothing, let me despise the finery of dress, the pomp of earthly lustre ; let me rather put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to *fulfil the lusts thereof*. The transitory fashions of the world, the gaudy trappings of pearls and fine linen, unless when necessary to fulfil the duties of the station we occupy, are beneath the dignity of an immortal spirit. Let me learn to condemn them even in the necessary use of them ; and learn to value and to discover the true dignity of dress in the clothing of humility, *and the splendour of Christian graces* ; that,

shining before God in the righteousness of the Redeemer, I may shine to his glory in the world in the likeness of my Lord. This is a most delightful view to faith, and graciously encouraging to its exercise and its fruitfulness. If I stand in Christ Jesus, I am adorned in beauty by my God as in him, though vile and polluted as in myself; and soon he will present me without spot, through the imputation of his righteousness, and the perfect work of his Spirit. This is thy case, thy happiness, thou weeping spirit, humbled under sin, depressed with thy infirmities, lamenting thy depravity, fearful of thy corruptions; God beholds thee in Jesus, and loves his Son in thee, and, therefore, loves thee in him. Let faith rejoice in him, for thou shalt shine in him with all the glories of righteousness, grace, and purity, through eternal ages.

Surely, then, the greatest glory belongs to him who makes all his people so glorious in himself. What praises can ever equal his excellencies, or the glories he bestows? If there be a wonder upon earth, it is an unthankful believer; with all the blessings of grace in possession, and with all the blessings of glory in hope, inattentive and insensible to his mercies and obligations. Our love, our joy, our gratitude is cold, because we do not realize those obligations in faith. Here, alas! we have all reason for deep humility; and yet, blessed be his Name, he has grace sufficient even to pardon this our ungrateful folly. Soon, however, shall we know him better, shall know him to value his love in its full enjoyment, and praise him for all, not as he deserves, but with all the powers which he has bestowed, in their fullest exercise, throughout eternity.



## ESSAY XI.

**Wedding Garment.**

THE Lord Jesus Christ is the true Christian's robe, in which alone he can appear in the presence of a holy God, be admitted to the enjoyment of spiritual blessings, or become a suitable guest at the marriage supper of the Lamb. The figure is equally just whether we refer the substance of it to justification or to sanctification ; to that which constitutes our right and title to the Divine favour, or the Christian's meetness for its enjoyment in the adorning of the Spirit. Both are spoken of under the same allusion, since he who is our righteousness is our sanctification ; since both are equally derived from him, though not in the same manner ; and he alone is our adorning, our beauty, and our ornament. It is of the utmost consequence, in the order of Christian virtue as well as Christian doctrine, to trace up all to him, to view them in connection with him, to be conscious of their dependence upon him, and to return him all the glory. Hence the Apostle, even when he is cautioning believers against sin, and exhorting them to the practice of Christian virtues, sums up the whole of his advice in that figurative expression—“ *but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.*”

When we consider the different purposes for which a garment is used, there will appear a peculiar propriety in the allusion ; and, like other figures by which he is represented to the eye of faith, it will discover still further to us his suitable excellencies : and if we are so happy as to know what it is to put him on by faith, we shall appear in him righteous and acceptable before God ; shall wear the

livery of his servants before men ; we shall appear evidently like our Divine Lord, and therefore be accepted as belonging to his family on earth ; while the robe of our Redeemer's righteousness, his own gift of grace, shall secure our admission to his family above, and the graces of his Spirit, in his own work upon the heart, prepare our hearts for the enjoyment of all the blessings provided at the banquet of his eternal love.

In the present state of man, to be destitute of clothing would be most unseemly in its appearance, as well as most destructive in its effects ; but to be destitute of that which is the clothing of the soul would be much more so in the spiritual world ; and as this allusion is frequently employed to represent the nature of spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, so the destitute and unprotected sinner is exhorted to buy of Christ “ white raiment, that he may be clothed.” (Rev. iii. 18.) His righteousness and salvation are compared to a nuptial robe and garment. (Isaiah lxi. 10.) Believers, in reference to this, are directed to put on their beautiful garments (Isaiah lii. 1) ; and as many as are baptized into Christ Jesus, not only by outward purification, but by the Spirit, not only into the Christian name, but into Christ, the Apostle declares, “ have PUT ON CHRIST” (Gal. iii. 27) ; and the reception of him by faith into the heart, the living upon him by faith, will answer to the believing mind all those purposes in a spiritual view, which the most suitable and ornamented garment answers to the body.

(1.) The first use of a garment is for *covering*.—Before the entrance of sin, in a state of innocence, that nakedness was the greatest ornament which is now the greatest disgrace : but as soon as sin had entered and deformed the workmanship of God, we find his fallen creatures employed in seeking the best covering which they could obtain. The scanty fig-leaves afforded a miserable shade to their naked bodies ; an emblem of their still greater inability, by their own energy or application, or by any thing around them, to hide the deformity and nakedness

of a soul debased in sin ; very soon to find much more need of a spiritual covering, *and a much greater inability to provide it*. To appear destitute of purity, righteousness, and heavenly love, before the eyes of a holy God, is much more disgraceful and distressing, than to appear destitute of clothing before the eyes of men. To appear in all the pollution in which sin hath defiled the spirit, in the sight of Infinite Purity, is to incur an odium much more awful than all the contempt and indignity which mankind could discover. Yet this is the state of a sinner, destitute of the clothing of a Redeemer's righteousness and grace. He is that only covering which can shade a guilty polluted sinner, that the pure rays of God may not look upon his deformity, or treat him with that indignation and contempt which his guilt deserves. He covers over the pollution of our nature ; not, indeed, to protect it, but to protect us while he takes it away. He covers over our actual transgressions, the corruption of our persons, and the defilement of our services ; and "blessed is the man whose iniquities are thus forgiven, and whose sin is covered ; to whom the Lord will not impute transgression." (Psa. xxxii. 1, &c.) So complete is his shadowing righteousness, that, arrayed therein, "God would not behold iniquity in Jacob, nor see perverseness in Israel." (Numb. xxiii. 31.)

This circumstance appears to have been represented by the clothing which God himself provided for our fallen parent, which is expressly mentioned to have been made of the skins of beasts : nor can it surely admit a doubt that they were the skins of those animals which by his own direction were slain as the sacrifice for their sin ; thus holding up to the eye of faith the twofold view of the dying love of Jesus, who, being offered for our sins, rose again for our justification ; who, dying as the sacrifice of atonement, is in his obedience even unto death the righteousness of his people ; becoming sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. "This," says one of the primitive reformers (Peter Martyr), "sha-



dowed the promised Messiah sacrificed on the cross, and cut out in garments for the clothing of his elect." Some have thought that the same was represented by the conduct of Jacob when under the necessity of clothing himself with the skins of the kids, in order to appear in the presence of his father Isaac to obtain the blessing. (Gen. xxvii. 16.) Be this as it may, it is evident that as the types become more full, the representation of Divine truth becomes more distinct and abundant ; and the acceptance of a sinner alone in the blood and righteousness of the vicarious sacrifice was clearly designated. The cover of the mercy-seat, called the propitiatory, was a beautiful emblem of the all-perfect work and righteousness of the Redeemer ; fully adequate to the demands of the law, through which the holy Lord God looks down with complacency and delight upon his believing Israel. To this, no doubt, an allusion is made when the Apostle represents him as " set forth by God to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his (own) righteousness for the remission of sins, &c. ; that God might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 25, 26.)

Blessed be that Redeemer who thus justifies from all things, while he covers our pollutions with the all-sufficient covering of his *everlasting righteousness*. Now, O gracious God, look upon me not as in myself, *but as in him*.

But this is not the only use of a garment ; it is also designed,

(2.) *For ornament and beauty*.—While it covers its defects and imperfections, it *adorns* the body, and gives a beauty to its external appearance. Through the pride and vanity which sin has introduced, this is the general object of dress amongst the different ranks of mankind ; each one emulating his superior, and discovering the vanity of an earthly mind in the temporal ornaments of pomp and show ; in consulting more for finery and splendour than for propriety and health. Alas, how vain ! What are all the garments of beauty and glory here ? How soon they are spoiled ! How soon worn out ! How useless and unavail-

ing in the enjoyment ! They give no true honour, no real advantage to the wearer. The glory which mankind are apt to assume to themselves above their fellow-creatures from the superior style and finery of their dress, is of all things the most fanciful and ideal ; rather, when we put them on let them remind us of our spiritual nakedness, our need of a better clothing of an all-perfect righteousness, in which to appear before God ; and those ornaments of the mind which constitute *true dignity, pre-eminence, and glory*.

No sinner can ever appear beautiful in the eyes of him whose judgment is according to truth, but in the garment of a Redeemer's righteousness : no soul can be ever all-beautiful, till it puts on the Lord Jesus Christ. He himself is essential beauty and excellency ; and he is the source of all glory to sinners. When faith receives him as our righteousness and sanctification, then, having Christ, being clothed with Christ, the believing soul is really honourable, and shall be honoured of God ; and he that wishes to glory, may " GLORY IN THE LORD." An unbelieving Dives, arrayed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, was in true dignity far beneath the distressed and famished Lazarus, that lay at his gate, full of sores. If a believer in Jesus, and interested in his salvation, the meanest believer in Christ possesses an honour in him that the world in all its glory knows nothing of ; though it does not yet appear what he is, nor what he shall be : it is however but a little time before death shall rend the veil, and change the state ; shall place all things in a true light, and discover where true honour and pre-eminence lies. When their Lord shall appear, they shall be like him. An unbelieving Dives shall sink to hell, a believing Lazarus repose IN ABRAHAM'S BOSOM.

In this view, the Lord Jesus Christ in his righteousness and grace is compared to a wedding garment, which was an ornamental robe, freely prepared and freely bestowed upon every invited guest, and without which no

one was admitted to the marriage feast, however rich or great: and this is the Gospel record (without a figure), that "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; and he that hath the Son hath life, but he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." And since this is freely prepared in the covenant of redeeming love, freely bestowed to faith in the Gospel by the Spirit, no one will ever be admitted into the presence of God, or to the enjoyment of his eternal blessings, but as found in Christ, accepted of him by faith: this is the necessary prescribed mean of acceptance before God, and admission to the blessings of salvation; clothed with him as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, we shall be fitted for the heavenly feast, where nothing can enter that defileth or maketh unclean. So the church of old was represented by the prophet, in itself a polluted infant, cast out to destruction: but when washed, perfumed, and anointed, clothed with the richest ornament of dress, her renown went forth among the heathen for beauty; "For it was perfect through my comeliness, which I have put upon thee, saith the Lord God." (Ezek. xvi. 14.)

But this garment of beauty and of glory is not only suitable to the guests, but is described as the ornament of the bride, to which the Lord condescended graciously to compare his church. As such the church is represented as exulting in it: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord: my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garment of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." With this she is described as beautifully arrayed, in that which the sacred writer denominates, "a song of loves," and which describes the virtues and glories of the heavenly Bridegroom: "Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir." "The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold: she shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle-



work." If inwardly adorned with the graces of the Spirit, what can this covering of Divine beauty be but the Lord her righteousness, with whom "she is clothed as with the sun," and appears as "a great wonder in heaven" (Rev. xii. 1), and is "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband?" (Rev. xxi. 2.)

He brings salvation near,  
For which his blood was paid.  
How beauteous shall my soul appear,  
Thus sumptuously array'd!

Salvation, Lord, is thine ;  
Thy saints shall all confess,  
The royal robes in which they shine  
Were wrought by sovereign grace!

This alone is the ground of acceptance, of justifying righteousness, to a sinner: though wherever he justifies, he sanctifies; and the putting on the character and image of the Redeemer, the copying the graces of his character, being inwardly conformed to his Spirit, and outwardly discovering the imitation of his virtue, makes the believer more excellent than his neighbour, magnifies the riches and the power of his grace, and adorns the doctrine of God our Saviour: and thus the believer does put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and makes not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Some think that this circumstance was typified by the garment of Aaron, the "holy garment for glory and for beauty" (Ex. xxviii. 2), which not only represented the adorning of our great High-Priest in the garment of Divine glory, and mediatorial purity, but that adorning which he puts upon his people, when he makes them kings and priests unto God and his Father; when he takes off the filthy garments with which corrupted nature is clothed; when he causes their iniquity to pass from them, and clothes them with change of raiment. (Zech. iii. 3, 4.) Then are his people suitably adorned, as a "royal priesthood, to shew forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light;" as "a

holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

A garment is designed still further to answer,

(3.) The purposes of *protection and defence* from the inclemency of the climate.—How miserably exposed should we be in this unfriendly climate, in the various seasons which sin has so put into disorder, without the aid of raiment suited to their variety! sometimes frozen and perishing with the cold; at others burnt and scorched, and languishing with the heat. Against both our garments are designed and calculated for protection; and to this it is our wisdom to adapt them; a just, but a faint, representation of the defence and protection that the believer experiences from the various effects of sin, in the Lord Jesus Christ, as a justifying Righteousness and sanctifying Redeemer.

No sooner had sin defiled the creation of God, than man, conscious of his debasement, fled trembling and afraid from the presence of Him in whom before he had found his complete delight. But the thick covert of the tree, no more than the scanty fig leaves, could hide him from His all-piercing eye, cancel his guilt and shame, or protect him from the severity of His indignation. Infinite wisdom and grace had, indeed, then appointed a way of deliverance, which the gracious Lord soon after revealed for the consolation of his offending creature; and by a continued source of typical circumstances was constantly pointing him to his state, and the person and work of the promised Redeemer. This alone he was taught could shelter him from the Divine indignation, and *cover him from the wrath of God*, when presented by the Father to the clothing which the Lord himself put upon him; that he might discover him as the free gift of a reconciled God; as suited to his wants, and as meet for his benefit, as the clothing which protected his body from the unfavourable element around him.

As the hottest flames cannot burn the body till they have affected or touched the garments by which it is covered, so (says another author) "it is the believer's comfort that

the wrath of God must burn the Lord Jesus Christ before it can burn him:" and as the wrath of God cannot any more come upon the Lord Jesus Christ, no more can it affect or touch the believer who is in him; since he is covered and protected by his wisdom, power, glory, and grace, all around. Let us, then, put on the Lord Jesus Christ by faith; and this will warm our hearts amidst all the chilling blasts of the world, its troubles, afflictions, wants, or miseries: this will screen, refresh, and revive us in all the scorching heat of trouble and temptation. A gracious and believing appropriation of his excellency will afford a sweet reviving heat to the cold and dying heart, or a refreshing cooling influence to a burning spirit; will afford precious consolation, and abundant peace, through the various scenes of life in a sinful world; and then it is Jesus who shall "deliver us from the wrath to come." In this respect he is compared not only to a garment, but to a covering of armour, every part of which is suited for defence and protection, and no part of which is wanting or deficient. Here is a sure protection from every enemy from within or from without; and as the great enemy of souls can never destroy him, so shall he never destroy those who are thus protected by his presence and his power. Let me, then, in this respect be found in Christ, and, realizing my security in the confidence of faith, adore the suitable and all-sufficient grace of my Redeemer.

Another use of a garment is,

(4.) For *honourable distinction*; and this is one chief and important design in the different kinds of raiment which we wear.—There is a dress which is suitable to every situation of life; and it has been the wisdom of mankind to adorn the most distinguished offices with robes of dignity, and such as might attract the attention of the people, more struck with outward appearance, and more able to judge of this, than of the secret qualities or *suitableness of things*. Though, at first sight, it may appear of little consequence in what manner men are attired; yet



a more close attention to the subject will discover that it is of the utmost importance to maintain the appearance of those relative distinctions in society which the providence of God hath appointed. If the proper distinctions are neglected, the access will be opened, and encouragement afforded, to that spirit of equality which is so natural to the human mind; the appointed distinctions in the order of Providence will be forgotten with the desire of their outward emblems. And when a spirit of insubordination becomes prevalent, that distinction will be destroyed which preserves the good order and peace of society.

That earnest desire in inferiors of aping the manners, and imitating the dress or general appearance of their superiors, while it discovers the natural pride of the human heart, is oftentimes excited and strengthened by a secret desire of this dangerous equality, which, when brought into action and general effect, has destroyed all social order. While, therefore, pride is equally evident either in the affectation or the desire of appearing beyond or beneath our situation in life, the dress becoming that rank or station in which the providence of God has placed us, and which is generally acknowledged to belong to it, is wholly proper, and even beneficial to society, for here wisdom is profitable to direct. There is also in mankind a natural expectation of such distinction: "Behold, they which wear soft clothing are in king's houses," says our Lord (Matt. xi. 8): this is the natural and proper place for such to appear in. So important, indeed, is this in the present state of the world, that there is scarcely any distinction or dignity among mankind, but what is marked out in this manner by some *external badge of honour*.

This was one use of the wedding garment among the ancients, to distinguish the acknowledged guests. To be interested in Christ, is that which will make the most important distinction among the children of men: it is this which places us among the children of God, and gives a right of admission to all the blessings of salvation, without which we yet remain in the kingdom of Satan, children of guilt,

and therefore "children of wrath." "Jesus Christ is in you," says the Apostle, "except ye be reprobates." "He that hath the Son of God hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Without Christ no sinner can have a right to enter to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. If he attempt to appear before God in any garment of his own preparing, a righteousness of his own procuring, never will he be accounted worthy of that honour; still all his guilt and deformity will appear before a holy God an unseemly sight; he will be unfit for the presence of Infinite Purity, or the spirits of the just; a shameful forlorn object, destitute of clothing, subjected to the scorn of men, exposed to every storm: and the vicissitude of the season affords but a faint resemblance of what a sinner is exposed to without Christ, destitute of the covering; the adorning, the defence of his righteousness and salvation. Like the poor lunatic who wore no clothing, neither abode in any house, but in the tomb, so naked, destitute, and miserable is the unhappy sinner under the influence of the spiritual enemy, till by the power of his grace he is healed, and by the gift of his righteousness he is adorned, and found sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind. Every attempt of self-righteousness is but like the miserable hiding-place which our fallen parents found behind the trees of the garden, or the wretched covering of fig leaves, that could not conceal their shame.

If not covered with Christ our Righteousness, all the fancied excellency of man will be found defective: "The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it" (Isaiah xxviii. 20): nay, it is not only defective, but still filthy and polluted; for "we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away." (Isaiah lxiv. 6.) The righteousness of a Paul, before his knowledge of Christ, though at that time great in his own esteem, and certainly as great as that of any Pharisee to the end of time, appeared to his enlightened mind afterward but less than dross or dung; nay, his

Christian graces, except as connected with Christ, he esteemed the same: "I account all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." If, instead of putting him on, then, as our righteousness, we are anxious to adorn ourselves, we shall be found wanting; and if, instead of putting him on as our sanctification, we are clothing ourselves with the works of darkness and sin, our state will be most awful; nor shall we ever obtain admittance into his kingdom above.

These are some of the uses which we derive from the garments with which we are clothed; and which do mark out, though in a very faint and imperfect manner, as all earthly blessings must, some of the glories and suitable excellencies of the Redeemer. He is the garment, the clothing of all his elect, the innumerable multitude of believing sinners; and none who believe in him need fear the extent of it to themselves, since his righteousness is infinite, and therefore all-sufficient to all his people. None need to doubt its sufficiency to cover over all their sins, and justify from all things, since its merit is as infinite as his own Divine nature. Like his own seamless robe, it is an all-perfect righteousness, richly adorned with his own Divine glory, that it may be, by gift of God, my ornament and beauty. He who is my life, my meat and drink, is also my raiment, that he may answer every purpose of life and salvation to guilty believing sinners. For this miserable body we need a variety of garments, and a constant succession of them; for the immortal soul that one garment is all-sufficient, and eternally the same in its beauty and glory, without a soil and without a stain. He can want nothing who has Christ: he wants every thing, in a spiritual point of view, who is without him. He can and does cover all his people completely from the guilt of sin, the sentence of the law, and the wrath of God; and makes them most glorious in himself throughout eternity. Like the garment of the Israelites in the wilderness, this robe is ever new, never changes, and never shall be worn out. "My salvation (says the Lord) shall be for ever; and my righteousness shall not be abolished." (See Isaiah li.



4—8); and, like the marriage garment, it is free in its bestowal to all who, upon the invitation of the Gospel, come to Christ for the blessings of his salvation; and, once obtained, it gives a right of admission to all the new-covenant blessings of grace and glory.

The humble believer finds a wonderful exaltation from the ruin of the fall to the throne of glory, because of his relation to the Lord Jesus, his union with him, and his participation of his work. Thus he rises into a participation of his glories and his honours; viewed as in him; one with Christ, and *he with him!* His glories are now communicated to the believer; faith receives a little; but the full communication shall be enjoyed when he sees him as he is. Here, then, may I, a poor, needy, naked, and polluted sinner, find my covering. Blessed Jesus, may I be found in thee, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is of the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith! Here, then, it must be recollected, that a garment is for use; and, unless it be actually put on, it will neither cover, protect, nor adorn us. Awake, then, and put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem. The righteousness and grace of the Redeemer can be of no advantage to the sinner, where they are not actually received; where he is not invested with them. If he be the righteousness and sanctification of his people, he must become *my* righteousness and *my* sanctification, or the doctrine will be a mere theory, and profession, an empty sound: I shall neither obtain the remission of my sins, nor the justification of my person, nor the regeneration and sanctification of my heart, by talking about his characters and excellencies, but by a real experience of their efficacy in my soul. It is, indeed, a sense of need that can alone lead me to this; without which I have neither seen nor can see any glory in Christ, nor suitableness why he should be desired; it is want alone which makes Christ precious. If a sense of want has led to the inquiry, how it is to be obtained,—“I counsel thee” (said

the Saviour to the destitute and the naked) “to buy of me fine raiment, that thou mayest be clothed :” but this buying is, it must be remembered, without money and without price ; this purchase is only a free and willing receiving : it is no more than his gracious counsel to necessitous and destitute sinners, to seek his righteousness, his grace, and Spirit, of him who has promised never to cast out any that come to him, who has engaged that all who **SEEK SHALL FIND**, and that to him that knocketh it shall be opened ; to seek this blessing alone from him, divesting themselves of every thought of merit or worthiness, assured that from no other and in no other way can the blessings of salvation be obtained.

If, then, you feel your need of him for righteousness, for justification, for beauty, and glory, and acceptance before God, let faith behold his person, character, work, and fulness, and rest in simple dependence upon him for all, and it shall not rest in vain. This is the great business and work of faith. You believe, penitent sinner, that Jesus is made of God unto his people wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption ; that his most glorious character is Jehovah our Righteousness ; that as he is appointed for this purpose of God, so he is all-sufficient in himself. Here, then, it is the work of faith to apply and receive the benefit : I need him in these characters. Not only the declarations of his word exhibit him in them, but the promises of his Gospel propose him to my faith. I accept from my heart his gracious proposal, resting my soul upon him, and trusting that he will become all this to me. I may trust the truth of God to fulfil his promise, and believe that it shall be unto me even as he hath spoken. With what truth, then, may every one of his believing people say, Surely in Jehovah Jesus I have righteousness and strength. As by the imputation of this righteousness by the act of his own grace his people are justified before God, considered as righteous in him, so when faith rests upon him its application is as sure as the promise of infallible truth ; faith takes the promise to rest upon, when

with the Apostle the humble believer entreats to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is of the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of *God by faith*. And when this, the free gift on one side, is united with the cheerful acceptance on the other, in the heart humbled and made submissive by the Spirit of the Lord, then Christ is actually put on, and becomes the ornament and rejoicing of the believing soul.

It is the sweetest exercise of faith daily to be found applying for, and realizing, this fulness of the Redeemer, by the humble reliance of hope, or the firm confidence of assurance; and thus to bring into daily experience the fulness of Christ, and the promises of the Gospel, for the peace, the joy, the sanctification of the heart. If we feel our need of him for sanctification, while he is the Source, while he is the Giver, the same promises encourage our expectation, and the same faith rests upon him, for the fulfilment of those promises, and the supply of needful grace for the Christian warfare, or for Christian duties. While we are thus looking to him, and endeavouring to put him on by the imitation of his example and the following of his virtues, partakers of the same spirit, we shall be formed into the same tempers; the same mind will be in us as was also in Christ Jesus; the same views will regulate our thoughts, words, and *actions*; we shall put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and not make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. (Rom. xiii. 13, 14.) While we thus appear as our Master, we shall practically put on the livery of his servants, and evidently appear as belonging to him; and, if we bear his character, we can expect no other treatment than that which he met with from the world around him; nor let us be ashamed of that which is our highest honour, but glory to wear the badge of such a servitude, the honourable distinction of the *servants of the Lord Jesus*.

Thus putting on Christ as our All and in all, he will be our glory and our salvation. Soon, when the spiritual



Bridegroom shall come, we shall be ready, and enter with him, to sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb. We shall be acknowledged as in him, with glory, who have been acknowledged as his, with contempt, on earth. God now sees thee, O humble believer, though conscious of various infirmities and much defilement, as in Christ Jesus, and hath put away all thy sin, and justified thee from all things: thou art adorned in his sight with the glories of thy Redeemer, to whom thou art united, and in whom is all thy dependence and salvation; and thou shalt soon behold his glory, see him as he is, and be completely like him. Glory be to this precious Saviour for assuming a name, a character, so suitable to our wants, and for fulfilling the character to all his believing people. May the Lord give me and you, my reader, to enjoy him in all his glories as our righteousness, our sanctification, our beauty, our clothing of protection and of ornament! and when we shine perfectly in his glory, he shall have all the praise. When all his church is presented thus arrayed, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, holy and unblameable, before him in love, then the full glory of his person, work, and grace shall be manifested, and the whole assembly of redeemed sinners shall glorify him throughout eternity.

## ESSAY XII.

**Rose of Sharon.**

WHENEVER we seek throughout the world of nature some suitable comparison by which to represent the person, the glory, or the grace of the Lord Jesus, we must direct our attention to those things which are most glorious, excellent, and beautiful in themselves, superior to all others, and most excellent of their kind: we shall soon, however, discover their insufficiency to afford us any adequate idea of *his perfections*. If, then, we combine all these individual excellencies together, still the effect will be the same; for as heaven is above earth, as spiritual things are above the things of sense, as the infinite God is above all his works of creation, so must every comparison from earth fall infinitely short of the true glories of GOD OUR SAVIOUR. This, however, is the only mode of instruction suited to the present state of man: it is only by sensible objects that he can be led to any knowledge of things which are unseen as yet: hence it is, that we meet with such a variety of allusions in the word of God, some expressive of the glory of the Saviour's person, others of his condescension, others of the suitableness of his mediatorial character, and office, or the blessings of his salvation. Jesus Christ, who, as the brightness of the Father's glory, is essentially the Sun of Righteousness, in his condescension and the amazing love of his cross is to his people as the Rose of Sharon, or the Lily of the Vallies; the most glorious and the most humble, the most dignified and the most condescending.

Here we may contemplate him again with pleasure and

delight: the spiritual mind will behold his glory in this beautiful emblem, perceive the fragrance of his name, taste the sweetness of his grace, and delight in the blessings of his salvation. May this Rose of Sharon thus spread its rich perfume around, and fill our meditation of him with the most pleasurable sensations of spiritual delight.

The rose is the chief of flowers: in Sharon was the greatest plenty, of the most beautiful hue and delightful fragrance: the emblem is therefore calculated to represent the superior excellencies which abound in him, and the view in which his people behold him.

When God created man he placed him in a garden to which he gave the name of Eden, signifying, in the original language, *pleasure and delight*; and there is something in the very appearance of a garden, when in its vigour and beauty, which tends to calm and compose the mind, to revive and exhilarate the spirits. Those images, therefore, which are taken from it, as they are most natural, and have a peculiar suitableness to the mind of man, are most pleasing and interesting: even though we enter into a minute or accurate consideration of them, they seem to meet the imagination, and produce involuntarily a peace and serenity in the soul. When these images are referred to the Lord Jesus Christ, they impress us immediately with the ideas of his humiliation, the condescension of his person, his gracious presence in his church, the garden of God below, where he affords himself easy of access, diffuses abroad the savour of his delights, the rich and satisfying blessings of his covenant and everlasting love.

(1.) The rose is *the chief* of flowers, and was especially the pre-eminent excellency of Sharon. So Jesus, in his person, in his mediation, and in every character, is superior to all beside, the chief glory of his church. What can exceed the majesty of Him, who, as God, is the brightness of the glory and the express image of the Father's person; in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead, its perfections and attributes, its majesty and grace, its dignity and



authority? What can exceed the excellency of Him, who as man was dignified in his soul with all moral and spiritual qualities, in all the tempers and graces which could adorn human nature, justice and truth, love and kindness, meekness and gentleness, patience and fortitude, magnanimity and mercy? But in the union of both natures with all their united perfections, his name is called Wonderful, because his person is incomprehensible: "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifested in the flesh:" herein he is the admiration of angels in heaven, as well as of the saints on earth; and though once as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, he appeared red as the rose in the humiliation of his bleeding cross, he now appears with all his full blown honours before the throne of glory. Yes, for the suffering of death he is now crowned with glory and honour; and because he became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, "therefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth."

Thus he is presented to the praises and admiration of the heavenly world, and they with united voices proclaim him worthy of all praise: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honour, and glory, and blessing," &c. Thus he is presented to the faith of his saints on earth, and to them that believe he is precious: their hearts admire him, and their lips proclaim him as the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. Thus "in all things he hath the pre-eminence." He is the highest in heaven, the most precious upon earth: in the works of nature and in the ways of grace, his power and glory appear shining above all beside; and in the attainment, the bestowal, the enjoyments of salvation, he is the All and in all.

(2.) As the rose is the chief of flowers, so *its beauty is most admired*: and the Lord Jesus Christ is not only pre-eminent in dignity and value, but in beauty also. Search through the scale of nature, and what can equal his? If we

would behold true beauty we must turn our eyes from those of earth and sense, and fix them upon the unchangeableness of God our Saviour; Immanuel, God with us. These are all but slender and even dying branches in comparison of that Plant of renown; withering before they are blown, dying before they can be enjoyed, perishing in the using. These are but streams without a spring, in comparison of that unfathomable and boundless ocean. At best they are but dark and imperfect copies of that bright pattern, that Divine original, the great Archetype of all excellencies human or Divine. This branch of the Lord is beauty and glory; and his fruits, when rising from the earth, are excellent and comely to his people. (Isaiah iv. 2.) This is the man whose name is **THE BRANCH**; the Branch of high renown; though lowly in its origin, unperceived in its growth, yet infinite and eternal in its glories. (Zech. vi. 12.)

Blessed Jesus! “**HE GREW UP OUT OF HIS PLACE**” quietly and unobserved: he appeared as the humblest flower upon earth, with no beauty discernible but to the attentive eye of the spiritual mind; but he flourished as a fruitful branch whose internal vigour was inexhaustible. He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. Soon his Divine glories broke forth even upon earth, and shone still more and more; till in his righteousness he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness; and rose triumphant to his throne, bearing his human nature into all the honours of the heavenly world; in union with his Divine perfection manifesting Divine glories, and exercising Divine authority upon the throne.

Thus, when the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, he manifested his glory, “the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;” thus he shines in our nature upon the throne above. Thus in his own person he combines all excellencies in the highest degree, all opposite excellencies in the fullest extent, and appears as beautiful to the eye of faith in his deepest abasement

*as in his essential majesty, holiness, and glory.* There is a beauty incomprehensible in his person, a milder beauty in his word, a most engaging beauty in his bleeding cross (the red-dyed beauty of the rose), and a still more appropriate beauty in his characters and offices: but there is a Divine glory in his intercession, and in all those blessings which are treasured up in him, and made over by the promises of God to his believing people; all of which are in Christ Jesus, yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God by us. When that Divine Spirit who is eminently the Spirit of Jesus, in the order of the mediatorial covenant, “takes of the things of Christ,” and reveals them to the understanding and to the heart, the sweet discovery engages the affections; and, determining the soul in the exercises of holy love, all things are accounted but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord—but dung and dross in comparison with his glories and blessings. If this discovery is made to us, and our hearts feel the force and beauty of the allusion, He will flourish in the affections of our souls more beautiful than the most beautiful hues of the Rose of Sharon.

But that which is particularly alluded to in the comparison is most probably,

(3.) The *superior fragrance* of this beautiful flower.—And here nothing else can be designed than that entire suitableness, and those reviving communications from the blessed and once humble Jesus in his church below, which make his names, offices, and blessings so much and so deservedly the objects of delight to all his people. All the odours and the sweets of nature are salutary in their effects; but it is not so with those of art: they revive the faint spirits only to debilitate still more. The sweet odours of the garden, bursting forth after a fallen shower, have as great and as salutary an influence on the animal spirits as the shower itself upon the parched earth, in calming the mind, softening the passions, and allaying their perturbations; and afford an exquisite delight to all the senses, which retain for a time the *soothing effect*. We, however, in these



colder climates can have but a slight conception of the odours and fragrance of the East. Who can conceive, without having enjoyed them, the combination of sweets from groves of aromatic shrubs! Mariners speak of being saluted with the delightful breeze, and of every sense filled with the fragrance as they pass by. Here was at first the paradise of Eden: and here might still be an Eden of delight, if it were not for sin, which destroyed the first; if there could be an Eden in the heart of man.

All, however, which these can do is, to exhilarate the animal frame, and delight the animal senses; but this the Rose of Sharon can do infinitely more, while he is to the soul what these are to the body. Sweeter than all the sweets of nature are the effects of his love applied by the teaching and influence of that Spirit who testifies of Christ: this brings a sweet peace into the anxious mind; the troubled conscience finds its sorrows relieved, the sinking heart is revived into a joy unspeakable: "The peace of God which passeth all understanding keeps the heart and mind by Christ Jesus:" the eye of faith is quickened to behold clearly the prospect of eternal glory, and the immortal soul waits in delightful anticipation for the complete enjoyment.

In whatever view we consider the Lord Jesus as appearing in his church below, there is a reviving fragrance in the consideration of the subject. In his person we behold the full-blown glories of Divinity; and how refreshing to the anxious spirit, waiting for his salvation, to reflect, Such is the Saviour in whom I trust, to whom I commit the keeping of my soul; his power almighty, his glory unsearchable, his ability infinite! that all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him; all engaged on the behalf of his church, to accomplish his purposes and promises of mercy, and their expectations of faith; to hear him bid me look to him for salvation, because he is God and there is none else! (Isaiah xlv. 22.) In his mediation, through every part a reviving fragrance of consolation meets the believing mind; in his undertaking, his atonement, his righteousness,

his prevalent and unfailing intercession, and in all the offices which as such he still and eternally sustains, there is such a ground of peace to the perturbed conscience, that when received in faith lays every fear at rest. (Isaiah xxvi. 3, 4.)

Some have thought that an allusion is here made to the bloody death of the Saviour upon the cross; that the colour of the rose marks out the bleeding Saviour, and the atonement in his blood. With reference to this, no doubt, the inquiry was made by the prophet,—“Why art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that hath trodden in the wine-press?” But if its colours lead us to Gethsemane and Calvary, to his passion and his cross, certainly the fragrance of this chief of flowers leads us to the consideration of their effects. We have peace through the blood of his cross. Ask the guilty conscience, why? and it will answer in the language of Divine truth on which it stays,—Because the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin; because we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God’s grace; because we are reconciled unto God by the death of his Son. Delightful truth! If thou couldst fully believe it, guilty conscience, all thy agitation would be changed into tranquillity, all thy fears into hopes, all thy sorrows into joy unspeakable; and while the lily (which will afford another beautiful subject of meditation) marks out his perfect purity and unspotted righteousness, as united with this delightful emblem which discovers him as bearing our sins and carrying our sorrows, we have the most engaging representation of the perfect Saviour; and, while interested in his preciousness, are bid to place a perfect confidence upon his ALL-SUFFICIENCY TO SAVE.

But though the metaphor may be rather considered as referring to his full-blown glories, as God and man, upon his throne, yet still the colours may mark the atonement in his blood; for even there he appears in the midst of the throne, as the Lamb that has been slain: even in his intercession he appears with the same beauty and fragrance,

pleading his dying love. The exalted Advocate never fails to show that he is the same who was the propitiation for our sins. These views of his person, characters, work, offices, and everlasting love, are more delightful and refreshing to the believing soul, than all the odours of nature in their strongest and most grateful influence to the sense of the animal nature. “How reviving, how exhilarating, the fragrance that is exhaled from this Plant of renown, which restoreth the soul again! When we obtain a smell of this heaven-planted flower, the heart is glad, the tongue rejoices, the sun puts on a bright beam, and every thing we behold assumes a brighter aspect.” (M'Ewen.)

Of this heavenly Plant it may be truly said, without fear of hyperbole,

Jesus, in thine each syllable  
Ten thousand blest Arabias dwell;  
Mountains of myrrh, and beds of spices,  
And thousand thousand paradises.

The heart which has felt the reviving influence of his presence, which in his ordinances has been led by his Spirit to behold the glories of his person, the suitableness of his character, and the fulness of his blessings, will cheerfully join this language of admiration.

How strange the insensibility of the carnal heart, which can discern no beauty in this perfection of excellencies! When the Lord Jesus Christ is thus represented, making their own ignorance the measure of their judgment, the description is treated as the rantings of enthusiasm; and, neither perceiving nor feeling its truth, it becomes the object of unjust derision. Soon, however, will it be found that weakness and folly have been the causes of such a delusion; for as the beauties of nature are unseen by the blind, the harmony of sounds unheard by the deaf; as the sweet odours of the springing flower are unperceived by those whose senses are vitiated, and all the delicacies of taste are lost upon the tasteless palate; so all the beauties of the Saviour are unperceived, and the blessings of his salvation disregarded, by the man who,



destitute of spiritual life, has no spiritual faculties to discern or enjoy their excellencies. The natural man knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Let him not, however, deride and despise what he knows not how to comprehend, but rather, as a rebel creature, convinced that there may be things of a spiritual nature beyond the power of his natural understanding, entreat the teaching of that Spirit, who alone can reveal them to the heart; the necessity of which influence is so fully represented in the word of God, and which is there promised to those who humbly seek his direction; without this they cannot escape the guilt of rejecting his truth, and despising the grace of his promise.

Another consideration is, however, suggested to us by some who have told us,

(4.) Of the *medicinal and healing virtues* of this Rose of Sharon; and in this it may certainly represent the suitability and glory of the Saviour.—It is his usefulness to his people, and the abundant blessings that he bestows upon them, that makes him so precious to their faith. If they value the name, the character, and the person of Jesus, it is not with a blind and undefinable admiration, but for properties in himself, and blessings derived from him, which must render him most deserving of their love: it is He who forgiveth all their sins, and healeth all their diseases: his bleeding cross is their honour, his blood the remedy for all their spiritual diseases, a balm for every wound, a medicine for every sickness. His blessings are the life and joy of their souls; and in proportion as they are taught to value these, so must they value him from whose heart as their source, from whose love as their cause, from whose hand as the bestower, they are incessantly derived. How delightful to the spiritual mind are the healing virtues of this Flower of Paradise! How precious is Jesus in all his blessings of salvation to the believing heart!

Matthew Henry has an idea, that as this is a beautiful pastoral, in which the Lord Jesus Christ is so represented,

it is the design of the allusion to present him to faith as suitable to adorn the souls of his people; that as it was customary for shepherds and shepherdesses to adorn themselves with the flowers of the field, so should we with holy delight adorn ourselves, as it were, with Christ Jesus. However this may be, he is our garment, and ornament of true beauty and glory: to put on the Lord Jesus Christ by faith will render a guilty sinner beautiful and fragrant with odours in the presence of a holy God, eternally accepted in the Beloved. Others have conceived, as this was no common rose, but a particular species, which grows not in the world at large, but in the land of Canaan; and not in every place in that favoured land, but within the tribe of Judah; that it marked the rise of the incarnate Redeemer from that favoured people, and especially from that distinguished tribe, and the change of the priesthood from the tribe of Levi to this eminent descendant of David; that its growth in the field of Sharon, which was peculiar for its folds and flocks (Isa. lxx. 10), represents the peculiar manifestation of his grace, in the midst of his church. These are views, no doubt, suitable to the analogy of faith, whether they are represented or not in this beautiful allusion. In his church alone his beauties are discerned, his glories admired, his benefits dispersed, and all his blessings enjoyed. There he diffuses abroad the sweet savour of his Name, and sends a delightful and reviving fragrance, through the ordinances of his appointment.

In another point of view, his blessings are spread all abroad, in the preaching of his Gospel; and thus, as the words might be rendered, he is the “*Rose of the field.*” Some have preferred this sense of the passage, intimating, that the Gospel salvation, published in the name of Jesus, is the common salvation both of Jews and Gentiles; open to all of every nation and of every age, of every situation and state in life; no more like a spring shut up, or fountain sealed, in the midst of the Jewish church, but the fountain open for sin and for uncleanness, in which Jesus is proclaimed as the Lord’s salvation *to the ends of the earth.*

This is the great glory of the Gospel; the excellency of the Lord our Saviour: the treasures of grace which are in him are laid up for sinners of the sons of men, promised to such in the Gospel: sinners, as such, are invited to receive and participate the benefits, while the promise ensures that "whosoever cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out." This opens to the wounded conscience the means of deliverance, and lays a sure foundation for hope and consolation: a sense of unworthiness, however deep, need never deter the penitent sinner, nor decrease his hope of mercy and salvation. However great the excellency of the Redeemer, he is the free gift of the Father; however great his blessings, they are the gifts of his own grace. Come and receive, is the only language of *the Gospel*.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Whoever will may come, and gather the buds and flowers of this Rose of Sharon; the privileges and comforts that grow, in the covenant of grace, on the Lord Jesus Christ in his church below. This, though secured by his almighty power from every ravaging enemy, is not locked up to prevent access, as is generally the case with a garden of choice flowers; but open to the penitent and the prayer of faith. While the glory, grace, and fulness of the Redeemer is abundantly satisfying to the mind of the needy penitent, the freeness of his grace is sweetly encouraging to the expectation of the believer. While all the fulness of redeeming glory is in the hand of our Jesus, it comes into the heart of his people in the exercise of faith, who, in the sweet enjoyment, render him back all the praise. Here, indeed, the faith of the believer stands solemnly reviewed. If faith be the mean of discerning and enjoying his preciousness, the weakness of his faith may be too readily discerned by the little the believer relishes and enjoys. If, according to the discoveries of the Divine word, there be in Christ Jesus an infinity of glories and excellency, how little do we discern what he is, or the nature and extent of his blessings! how little at best do we value his *inestimable*



*preciousness!* Lord, increase our faith, our spiritual perception, that we may behold thy beauty, and be revived with the fragrance of thy love and grace.—Recollect, O believer, those happy seasons, when faith has presented to thy view his glories, when you have dwelt with holy pleasure upon his offices. How suitable and how precious has he then appeared to your admiring mind! more delightful than all the assemblage of beauties and of sweet odours which nature can afford. If faith dwelt more upon the wonderful representations of his word, these views would be more embraced, as well as more familiar to the believing mind; and all the spiritual senses would be more abundantly exercised in the constant and increasing enjoyment.

There the glories of this Divine Redeemer are represented by every thing of superior excellency among mankind; and the enjoyment of him by faith is compared to the highest gratification of every sense. If he be a pearl, he is the Pearl of great price: if he be a treasure, he is a hidden Treasure, in the enjoyment of which a man is well repaid for the sacrifice of all beside: if he be a rose, he is the Rose of Sharon. When walking in the garden surrounded with the sweets of nature, the rose beautifully blooming rises around us in dignity and fragrance above the flowering shrub; but the Rose of Sharon is pre-eminent above all the rest: so abundant are the Gospel blessings rising in the garden of his church; but Jesus alone stands pre-eminent above all, the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. His glory eclipses every rising form of beauty; yea, in that he stands beyond every emblem on earth, as the cause of all the surrounding delights: without him there is no beauty nor excellence, and before him all others fade.

All the stars together could never make one sun; but the sun shall be ashamed, and the moon confounded, when He shines in his glory by his people. “Oh, may the creatures, then, be my constant clue to the Creator! for this is a certain truth, and deserves my frequent recollection,

demands my most attentive consideration, that the whole compass of finite perfection is only a faint *ray* shot from that immense source,—is only a small *drop* from that inexhaustible ocean,—of all good.” (Hervey.)—“Solomon” (says the pious Hervey), “a most penetrating judge of human nature, knowing how highly mankind are charmed with the fine qualities of flowers, has figured out the blessed Jesus, that ‘fairest among ten thousand,’ by these lovely representations: he styles him the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valleys; like the first, full of delights and communicable graces; like the last, exalted in majesty, and complete in beauty. In that sacred pastoral, he ranges the creation, borrows its most finished forms, and dips his pencil in its choicest dyes, to present us with a sketch of the amiableness of his person; his amiableness who is the Light of the world, the Glory of his church, the only Hope, the sovereign Consolation of sinners; and exalted, infinitely exalted, not only above the sublimest comparison, but even ‘above all blessing and praise.’ May I also make the same heavenly use of all sublunary enjoyments! Whatever is pleasurable or charming below, let it raise my desire to those delectable objects which are above; which will yield not partial but perfect felicity, not transient but never-ending satisfaction and joy. Yes, my soul, let these beauties in miniature always remind thee of that glorious Person, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Let these little emanations teach thee to thirst after the eternal Fountain.”

What glories, then, must shine where he displays all his glories! What a heaven must that be where he is the Light and the Sun; where he is the Fruit and the Tree of Life; where he is the All and in all! That time is hastening on, O believer, when thou shalt see him as he is, and when thou shalt be able to enjoy him, with powers renewed and fitted for that eternal state. Look forward, then, in the views of faith directed by the word and promises of the Gospel, and faith shall bring a gale from those delightful shores, laden with the fragrance of him; the reviving

anticipation, the sweet foretaste, shall animate thee to go forward toward *the full enjoyment*. Tasting of his love below, and rejoicing in his salvation, you will cheerfully magnify his person, and praise him for the rich wonders of his grace; hasting unto, and waiting for, the grace which is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. In the mean time, let the field of nature lead you to the fountain of grace, and beholding his glory shadowed forth, though but faintly in comparison of their true dignity, in all around you, learn to raise your mind from earth to heaven, and to adore him in and through his lower works, whom you hope to adore and enjoy perfectly in his kingdom above.



## ESSAY XIII.

**The Lily of the Valleys.**

THE mind of man (fallen from the true dignity of its nature into earthly and sensual things) is too apt to pass by unheeded the presence and the hand of God in the most striking of his works; and, instead of seeing God in every thing, to behold him in nothing. To “live as *without God in the world*” is the awful character of fallen man; a character which, arising from the natural corruption of the human heart, is still further confirmed by the necessity which the sinner feels of forgetting him against whom he has offended, as long as he has no disposition to return to him. Nothing, however, can afford such pleasure, such satisfaction or consolation, to the renewed mind, as beholding the Divine hand in every thing around us; in every thing to contemplate his wisdom, power, and goodness, in the dispensations of his providence and his grace, regulating all things in the government of his church; to have the mind directed further into the glories of the Saviour, and to discern the evidences and illustrations of the fullness of his salvation.

Thus the Scripture directs our contemplation, and by the greatest variety of its allusions uses the world of nature to represent the things of the spiritual world. Here, indeed, is a subject which can never be exhausted; and, while it affords the most exquisite delight, abounds with instruction to the spiritual mind. Following the scriptural clue, there is scarcely any thing around us but from which we may take the opportunity of elevating our thoughts above, to the God of nature, providence, and grace, the glory and

office of the Divine Saviour, and the infinite blessings of a spiritual nature, which are treasured up in him.

This has appeared in the consideration of many of the former titles and characters, but especially in that of the Rose of Sharon, which the inspired writer connects with this. No doubt, something further is intended by adding this allusion to the preceding; though in some respects they may be alike, there are others in which they differ, and something to be learnt by the union of both. May we discern the beauty of this most beautiful Plant, extract the sweetness of this sweetest of flowers, crop its reviving blossoms, and in meditation inhale its odours! Uniting them together as an assemblage of beautiful and odoriferous flowers, may we place the collection near our hearts, and revive all our spiritual faculties and senses with the fragrancy of its perfume!

The flower of the lily was among the carved ornaments of the temple, and appeared upon several parts of its structure and its utensils; and the chapters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work. (1 Kings vii. 19.) Upon the top of the pillars was lily work, so was the work of the pillars finished (ver. 22); the brim of the molten sea was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies. (ver. 26.) No doubt amidst that beautiful assemblage of typical representations, the substance of all which was Christ, these must have their specific meaning; and, as being the emblems of purity, were attached to that which was the support of the temple, or means of purification to the people.

But the lily here spoken of, remarkable for its beauty and fragrance, is said also to have possessed a medicinal virtue. This, whatever it may be, is but a faint image of him who forgiveth all our sins, and healeth all our diseases; whose blood is the universal restorer, and whose leaves, as the tree of life, are for the healing of the nations. This, however, we have considered under the title of the Rose of Sharon: there will therefore be no need to enlarge upon that point here.

Its *beauty* is particularly noticed by the Lord himself,

when he tells us, that “Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” The superior eminence of its beauty may justly represent the perfection of the Redeemer principally in his condescension, but also in his exalted majesty, as God, as man, as God-man Mediator, that gracious object which angels and redeemed sinners admire, adore, and love above all; because in all things he hath the pre-eminence; who, in his person, work, character, and offices, as bearing the glory of the only begotten of the Father, rises above all that come in comparison with him, and who even in the agonies of the garden, his bloody sweat, and despised cross, manifests most especially his excellency to his people.

The Lily of the Valleys had *a strong perfume*. This is no doubt applicable to Christ, representing the reviving communication of his love and grace, infinitely more to the soul, to the conscience, and the heart, than all the sweets of nature joined in one powerful aggregate of fragrance. Say, ye who have found peace through the blood of his cross, who have felt your guilty conscience consoled by the manifestation of his pardoning love, and your fears and sorrows turned into joy by the hope of his salvation, what a delightful fragrance does it still spread over all the spiritual senses, to meditate on his person, his mediation, his Divine love, his continual and prevailing intercession, and the abundance of grace, benefits, and blessings treasured up in him, while the words of promise which flow from his lips render them “like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh.” (Cant. v. 13.)

But as the whiteness of the lily may here be considered as contrasted with the redness of the rose, and as the addition of this allusion to the preceding is intended to add something more to the description of his glories, let us consider it more attentively.

(1.) The most evident design is the *unspotted purity* and *perfect righteousness* of his person.—“By the Lily of the Vallies” (says the pious Hervey), “I apprehend, is meant, not the flower which commonly passes under



that denomination, and is comparatively mean; but the grand, majestic, garden lily, growing in a rich irriguous soil, where it flourishes in the most ample manner, and arrives at the highest perfection." As such, some have referred it to the exalted and Divine glory of the Redeemer. In this he stands arrayed in all the Divine perfections and attributes, not only appearing as righteous, but Righteousness itself, the source and centre of all, "*the Sun of Righteousness*." In exhibiting his victory over his enemy, this is represented as that part of his character on which it rests, and by which it was secured: "I speak in righteousness." And let this be thy encouragement, O believing sinner! resting upon him, as still securing his promise, the application of his salvation, and thy preservation in and to the complete enjoyment.

But we must evidently consider it as more especially designating the purity of his mediatorial character: in this the humble Jesus appears like the lily of the valleys; the unspotted purity of his human nature adorning his sacred character from the manger to the tomb. Of him alone can it be said, that he was not "*born in sin*." The manner of his birth was designed to indicate this: the Child born and the Son given was to be born of a virgin; eminently, according to the first promise, the Seed of the woman, and of her alone, by his extraordinary conception under the influence of the Holy Ghost preserved from the contamination of human guilt and depravity, and therefore spoken of in his birth in a manner so very different from that of every child of Adam, who are all "conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity;" evil forming a coherent part of a corrupted race; while of him it is said, "*That Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God*." (Luke i. 35.)

While men with great pains and artifice are endeavouring to invalidate the plainest evidence of his miraculous conception, this alone constitutes his suitableness and sufficiency to become the Saviour of sinners; a work which never could have been effected by him who was a sinner

himself; and the fact lays a ground of gratitude to God for the wonderful interposition of almighty power and infinite grace *in the gift of such a Saviour*. Undeified in his nature, and clear from inherent corruption, he appears from his infancy as the “**HOLY CHILD JESUS**;” and during the whole of his life, free from actual transgression, he is “**THE HOLY ONE AND THE JUST**.” Though ranked among sinners, and considered as such by men—and, what is still more astonishing, treated as such by God, as bearing the transgressions of many—he is in himself holy, harmless, undeified, and separate from sinners: in the meekness and gentleness of his character, he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax; but in the purity of his heart he cannot bear the despiser of his heavenly Father, and in his zeal for his glory avenges the honour of his temple. (Matt. xxi. 12, 13.) The Spirit of holiness having been poured upon his sacred head without measure, he found his pure delight in all the holy exercises of devotion to God, and of righteousness and benevolence towards men. It became him to fulfil all righteousness, and he alone could perform it: that righteousness which is the perfect fulfilment of the law of God is found in the blessed Jesus without a stain, a mixture, or an imperfection: “**He is the Lamb of God, without blemish and without spot**.” The searching eye of truth and justice could perceive no flaw; his enemies were compelled to acknowledge, “**He does all things well**;” his betrayer testified that he had betrayed the innocent blood; while his judge, after the fullest inquiry of his avowed enemies, could find no fault in him. The lily is but a faint emblem of his immaculate character: the beautiful purity of the full blown lily feebly represents the perfection of his obedience. What a suitable Saviour is this “**RIGHTEOUS ONE**” for an unrighteous sinner! “**the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God!**” The holy and righteous God looks upon him with delight, and pronounces him his “**beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased**,” “*always well pleased*.” This, which gives the virtue to his work and his atonement, still gives



the efficacy to his intercession, when he appears the Advocate for returning sinners to the Father; and this assures us of acceptance, that he who presents our prayer is “Jesus Christ the righteous, the *same who was the propitiation for our sins.*”

Here, then, let me contemplate, not only my righteous Saviour, and the Lord my Righteousness, but my righteous Pattern, the exemplar of all perfection in every grace and virtue. In the graces of his human nature I behold the suitable and perfect example for my imitation. Let me look at him by faith in the glass of his word, while I am continually changing into the same image from glory to glory, till I have the same mind in me which was also in Christ Jesus. (Phil. ii. 6—11.) The perfect beauty of the believer consists in his union with Christ and conformity to him: when sin is blotted out with his atoning blood, though red as scarlet in former defilement, the heart of the believer becomes as white as snow in purification from its guilt, for the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin. In his righteousness he appears pure and beautiful as the lily in the sight of God. Blessed, then, is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sins are covered, and to whom the Lord will not impute sin, where the Lord will not behold iniquity: justified from all things, there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

But let me always recollect that his Spirit sanctifies those whom his grace forgives; that, created in righteousness and true holiness, they are formed into the image of him that created them, transformed in the renewing of their minds; that where the same Spirit resides, the same image will be visible; and though at present their likeness to their Lord and Saviour is imperfect, it will soon be complete above. Let us, then, recollect, that as related to that Son of God who was without spot of sin, it is the great privilege as well as obligation of believers to walk in his steps; “to be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, and thus to shine *as lights in the world.*”



(Phil. ii. 16.) Let me not think I am among them, if destitute of his Spirit, since “if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” When that Spirit becomes the Teacher of his people, their view of sin as a transgression of the law, their views of this world in its vanity and guilt, their views of another in its realities and glory, will bear some resemblance to those of their Divine Master; and their character, therefore, before the world will be similar to his, who hath declared, “Ye are not of the world, **EVEN AS I AM NOT OF THE WORLD.**” How, indeed, can we delight in this Saviour, without a similarity of disposition, a conformity of heavenly mindedness to him? If sinners, under the power of sin, apprehend that they can delight also in the Saviour, it must arise from their ignorance of his character and design, and the nature of his salvation, since no nature can delight in that which is contrary to itself.

An awful thing is it to pretend to an interest in his grace, if its effects are not manifested upon the heart. His people are like himself; they put on as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, &c.; for whom he justifies them he also sanctifies. Thus they bear a resemblance to this Lily of the Valleys, and are called by the same name: as such he delights to view them growing in his church, though at present as “the lily among thorns.” (Cant. ii. 2.) How many things are there around to injure and to prevent its growth, to hide its excellency, or to distress and grieve the plant of grace! But it is the care of the church’s Saviour; and soon shall it be transplanted to its own native soil, where there shall be no pricking briars, no choking thorns, to flourish in perfection, completely like himself in eternal vigour, beauty, and fragrance, in the garden of God above.

(2.) The great *condescension and humiliation* of the blessed Jesus in this world of sin and sorrow, as connected with his spotless purity, is most especially designed by the allusion of the “Lily of the Valleys.”—Such, indeed, he

was when he left his throne of glory, his place of eminence above, to dwell in this valley of Baca, this vale of tears and sorrow, of sin and misery, to adorn his human nature with his perfection, while he suffered continually the consequences of its guilt and sin.

Here he appeared not with the towering grandeur of the lofty cedar, lifting his head above the surrounding shrub, but as the humble lily, among the lowliest of the low, the purest of the pure, “ eminent only in sorrow, and with distinction only in the highest ranks of trouble.” He assumed no dignity, claimed no greatness, arrayed himself with no glory, except that which necessarily shone forth from the splendour of his miraculous work. “ Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich.” Who were the associates of his humble state? Not the great, the noble, and the renowned, though some of these were brought by the providence of God to pay their honour to him in his infant state; yet in general he was unknown and unregarded by the great ones of the earth, except as attracted by those wonderful displays of wisdom and of power in which they might have beheld the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, had they not refused to observe them, and to investigate their nature.

Never was there such contempt poured out upon human greatness, and all the glory which earth can boast, as in the condescension, the character, and conduct of the Son of God on earth. Poor fishermen were his disciples, among the poor they chiefly associated, to the poor his Gospel was preached; and though he never restrained his liberality, nor his miraculous acts of beneficence, yet such were the general objects of his compassion: he went about doing good to these, and wrought two of his chief miracles of Divine power to feed a multitude of these, who were unable to procure in their present situation the necessary supply of food. How kind, how condescending, how beneficent, was the hand and heart of this humble

Saviour! How sweet, how reviving, according to the beautiful allusion before us, was the fragrance of this Lily of the Valleys, when it grew in this vale of tears and woes!

“The circumstance of the valleys, added by the sacred writer, is significant not of the *species*, but of the *place*. This is by far the noblest interpretation, and most exactly suitable to the spiritual sense; which intimates, that the blessed Jesus delights to dwell, by the communications of his Spirit, in humble hearts.—*שרשכת־העמקים*—*the Lily that grows in the valleys.*” (Hervey.) Here, then, according to this elegant writer, is marked out the spiritual presence of Christ with his people in his church below, in its humble, afflicted, and militant state. Once in his lowly form he dwelt personally among them in their dreary dwelling; but though now exalted to his throne of glory, yet even now the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, who dwells in the high and holy place, will look upon the humble and the lowly in heart, and those who tremble at his word: such is now his love and grace. He himself hath pronounced, “Blessed are the meek and the poor in spirit, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” These are the peculiar objects of his regard, and of such his church consists on earth. Are they not the poor of this world, that, as to the general number, are rich in faith and heirs of the promise? And though not altogether so, though his grace sometimes discovers its glorious triumph in the hearts of the rich, the wise, and the noble, yet even such are then brought to feel and to confess their spiritual poverty: they become poor in their own eyes, lowly in their own sight, fools in their own apprehension as to spiritual wisdom, passing through the valley of trouble, temptation, and inward sorrows, which thus becomes the valley of humiliation to their souls. Here, in the lowly mind, the Lord delights to dwell: he passed through the same path, and has promised to be with them there in the lowest frames, the most humbling states of trouble and affliction: his presence is their delight and joy. When shining around them, they want no more: it is more reviving than the richest perfume of the most odoriferous flower to the faint-



ing spirit. And hath he not said, “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee! when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee; for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will help thee; yea, I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness?” What time can be out of the reach of that comprehensive promise, “I will never leave thee; I will never, no never, forsake thee?” Therefore we may boldly say, “The Lord is our helper: we will not fear what man can do unto us. He will be our present help in every time of trouble.”

This gives us a delightful view of this blessed Jesus, this Lily of the Valleys, delighting in his church below. Let thy spiritual senses, O humble believer, be revived with its fragrance; or, without a figure, let faith dwell upon these animating views, and draw their sweet encouragements into the soul, and the weary and heavy laden will find the return of rest.

While these views illustrate the glories of the Redeemer, which are marked out by the distinct qualities of the rose and the lily, we may learn still more of his excellencies by considering,

(3.) What is implied in *the union of them*.—The lily and the rose are united together in *the person and character of our Lord*. And may we not in this contemplate the union of the Divine and human nature in the one person of the Lord our Redeemer? The representation of this, indeed, must necessarily be feeble, and every image or allusion faint and imperfect: but we must be content to draw the illustrations of the sublimest truths from the simplest appearances in nature, while we are subjected to the present mode of spiritual instruction. Thus when we consider the rose in its perfection and full-blown beauty, it may represent the shining glories of the Divine perfections; while the lily, in the lowliness of its place, gives us an interesting view of the condescension of the pure and

upright Saviour. The rose, in its colour, may in some measure represent to us the deep humiliation, the bloody sweat, and bleeding cross of Jesus; and the lily, in its uncontaminated, though exquisite, purity, may in a measure represent the absolute purity of the Divine nature, but more especially the all-perfect Divine righteousness of the God-man, and Mediator, in the nature of his brethren, which he had assumed in this valley of humiliation. Every way we behold two distinct natures in the person of Immanuel. Herein consists the glory of the ever blessed Jesus; herein the great mystery of godliness, that God was manifested in the flesh. In the language of prophecy, the Seed of the woman is Immanuel, God with us; the Child born, and the Son given, is the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father.

Let the wise, the learned, the reasoners of this world, be stunned and confounded at the wonderful fact, the believer learns to submit his wisdom to the infinite wisdom of Jehovah; to believe what God hath spoken, perfectly satisfied that the Divine power is not bounded by the limits of our understanding; and that, though we cannot comprehend it, *his word is truth*. He knows, indeed, that for a guilty sinner the only foundation of pardoning mercy rests upon this fact; that the only source of our joy and triumph are in the Lord our righteousness and strength. He joins, therefore, the language of the triumphant church, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." (Isaiah xii. 1, 2.) He acknowledges, therefore, God and man in one Christ; giving dignity to his atonement, merit to his righteousness, efficacy to his cross, and security to all the purposes of his redeeming love.

We cannot wonder, then, when we discern the most perfect contrast, the most opposite qualities uniting in the person of Jesus, and ascribed to him in his word. This might justly be expected from such a union of nature. If he be God and man in one Christ, he must possess all the

graces of the one, and all the excellencies which can adorn the other, and his name must indeed be "*The Wonderful*." We might expect to find him sometimes speaking and acting as God, at other times as man : nor shall we be surprised nor perplexed when in his humbled state on earth we find him at times actually laying claim to an equality with the Father, and at others acknowledging a subordination and submission ; an inferiority of dignity, wisdom, and power.

In the person of the Redeemer, Jesus, is united the highest dignity and the utmost lowliness ; the highest glory and the deepest condescension ; almighty power and the weakness of the cross ; infinite wisdom and child-like simplicity. He possesses infinite riches, and yet appears in the deepest poverty ; infinite glories, and yet sinks to the utmost debasement : absolute and uncontrolled authority is his who is the meek and lowly Saviour. His essential character is, the Lion of the tribe of Judah ; his assumed, the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot. In his own right he is the Lord of lords, the King of kings ; yea, the Lord of all ; and yet appears and acts as the servant of his heavenly Father, yea, the servant of his people. He rules upon the throne of glory, and yet appears as a man upon earth ; and yet, as man, "is the hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the storm ; as rivers of waters in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in this weary land," to his believing people.

But what, perhaps, is principally designed in the allusion, is,

(4.) *The union of perfect purity and righteousness with the most bitter and bloody sufferings of human nature.*—This is most probably the design in the description which the church gives of her beloved in Cant. v. 10:—"My beloved is white and ruddy ;" infinitely pure, and deeply afflicted. In this the Divine Redeemer, as in all things beside, stands pre-eminent and alone. Sin and sorrow are necessarily connected ; "sin entered into the world, and death by sin:" ever since, they have been the close attend-



ants on each other ; and we account justly and satisfactorily for the sufferings of a guilty race, because "*all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*"

But here is the peculiarity of the Redeemer's state : while acknowledged by Heaven and earth, as possessing the perfection of purity, he is eminently the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ; though absolutely righteous ; he is condemned to the ignominy and agonies of the cross, after having been arraigned as a criminal, *and pronounced guiltless*, there he hangs as one accursed, dying the death which the law had specially denounced as such ;—"Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Yea, the sword of his Father awakes against the man who is the Shepherd of Israel, the man that was Jehovah's fellow ; and it pleased the Father to bruise him in whom his soul delighteth. How great the mystery of redeeming love exhibited at the cross ! In what manner beside can the mystery be unfolded than in the declaration of the prophet,—"that he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities ; that the chastisement of our peace was upon him, that by his stripes we might be healed ?" (See Isaiah liii. *passim*.) This, indeed, is the concurring testimony of Prophets and Apostles, who unitedly declare, He bare our sins and carried our sorrows in his own body on the tree ; dying, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God !

There cannot be a more beautiful contrast than in the appearance of these two flowers when placed together : the virgin white of the beautiful lily adds a higher bloom to the crimson blushes of the rose, while the high colouring of the rose exhibits in its utmost perfection the uncontaminated purity of the lily. Thus the righteousness and the sufferings of the Redeemer reflect a glory on each other : his deepest sufferings and abasement derive a dignity and virtue from the perfection of his righteousness, and at the same time discover its unchangeableness and glory. The Saviour all-perfect, essentially so in his Divine nature, is in his mediatorial character made perfect

through sufferings ; his complete glory is the perfection of each, and the union of both.

Here, then, let me stand and view him, till my mind is led into the highest admiration of the blessed Jesus. What wonders must for ever meet and centre in him—in his PERSON, CHARACTERS, AND WORK ! Angels before the throne with holy and earnest desire are looking into the mystery connected with these, and yet will never be able fully to understand his glories or his grace. Jesus is the wisdom and the power of God, as he is the salvation of his people. Never should my mind be wearied with studying the manifestations which he hath made of himself, and contemplating that great wonder which will be the *wonder of eternity*. Let me endeavour to discern and find out more of his glories in every way and in every allusion by which he has revealed them, till I am more disposed to love and praise his holy Name.

Eternity will present him in a still more glorious view, when he shines without a veil, without a figure, in the full-orbed glories of his nature, in the beams of uncreated brightness. In the mean time, let every thing in nature teach me some important lesson of my Redeemer ; especially those things which he has condescended to honour by employing them for these purposes as emblems of himself. Thus let me discern more of his glories and his graces, and the excellency of the spiritual blessings of his redeeming love. More especially when the wintry season yields to the reviving spring, its dark and gloomy storms to the brightness of the returning sun, when the flowers appear on the earth, and nature puts on its animated beauties, let me behold the beauties and glory of the blessed Jesus portrayed with the pencil of nature on every flower that blows ; while beholding them all as the gifts of his bounty, let me consider them in a still higher light, following the direction which his own wisdom has given me, as emblems of his essential and mediatorial excellency to his church and people.

When I walk in the field and garden, let every thing

point my mind, disposed to spiritual meditation, to the Lord my Saviour, the sum of all beauty and excellency. If I gather the rose or the lily, let me remember him. If I unite them together, or collect the beautiful assemblage from the great variety of the stores of nature, or contemplate the various colours, properties, and sweets that are every where diffused around me, let me not forget to admire the varied displays of Divine goodness, wisdom, power, and beneficence : and least of all let me forget the assemblage of various excellencies in the God-man Christ Jesus; designed for my enjoyment, diffusing their varied fragrance around me in the word and ordinances of the Gospel church, but most abundantly blessing his church above. Thus shall my mind be constantly raised from earth to heaven, and be lifted from the beauty of earth to more glorious realities. Here, perhaps, the human mind finds its most real and gratifying delight : but while resting in the things themselves it rests far short of the true design of the great Creator, who by them has led us to himself, and has condescended to use them as emblems of grace to direct us to the glories of the Saviour. My present enjoyment of them will not be interrupted, but greatly advanced, when using them for this more exalted purpose, and beholding them as the fading representation of unfading glories beyond. Thus beholding the Redeemer by faith in every excellency of nature which surrounds me, I shall be preparing to behold him as he is, in the full enjoyment of all his glories, in the world of bliss, the paradise of God.



## ESSAY XIV.

**Moses.**

THE names of Moses and of Christ are generally considered as opposite the one to the other, as standing at the head of two different dispensations of God. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Of these the Apostle considers the one as the dispensation of death, the other as the dispensation of the Spirit; the one as the ministration of condemnation, the other as the ministration of righteousness; the one, though glorious in itself, yet as having no glory in comparison of the excelling glory of the other, and therefore passing away that the other might remain. These points of distinction might with equal justice be applied to the different heads of those dispensations, who, in this respect, as in many others, are as unlike as the Law and the Gospel: the circumstances of similarity are, however, as many, and in which the one is but the type and figure of the other. Hence the Messiah is predicted by the Jewish Lawgiver himself as the Prophet which should be raised up of their brethren like unto him. This similarity in his office and treatment is evidently alluded to by Stephen, in his reasoning with the Jewish elders (Acts vii); and is frequently referred to by the Apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews. The comparison has been run into a variety of particulars: we shall endeavour to select those which are most plain and important, and most clearly display the glory and the grace of the Redeemer. May that great Teacher teach us of himself, by that Spirit of wisdom which he communicates to his people; that, beholding him in every view as

excelling in glory, we may admire, love, and delight in him !

The parallel may be carried with the greatest propriety through the circumstances of his *birth* and *appointment*, the *treatment* he received, the *conduct* he displayed under all, the *various characters* he sustained among his people, and *the manner* in which, by the Divine interposition, *his mission was confirmed*.

(1.) *As to his birth*.—This wonderful Deliverer of Israel from the slavery of Egyptian bondage was one of that very people, chosen and appointed of God from among his brethren ; and though high in dignity at the court of Pharaoh, he yielded up all his honours to acknowledge the relationship and accomplish his design. And was not our great Deliverer raised up of his brethren, exalted from among the people ? Though high in honour and glory, not in the character of an earthly king or prince, but in the kingdom of heaven, he condescended to bear the nature of his brethren whom he should redeem, emptied himself of all his glory, and in all things was made like unto us ; he appears as the Child born, and the Son given, though the wonderful Counsellor and everlasting Father ; and “ forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner took part of the same.”

(2.) Moreover in this his state of humiliation he was especially *appointed of God* ; and having been set up in the counsels of eternity, is commissioned with a voice from heaven, and designated to the office of Redeemer and Deliverer of his people. (Compare Exod. iii. 4, and Matt. iii. 13—17.)

(3.) When entering upon his work, *the treatment* he experienced from all around was in exact agreement with the reception of the holy Child Jesus.—Was he cast out from the birth ? so was the condescending Lord : for such an heavenly Guest no room could be found in the dwelling of the rich, or even the meaner accommodations of an inn : his birth-place is a stable, and his cradle a manger. Was the life of Moses sought for by a cruel tyrant, who murdered

all his fellow-infants? how forcibly does this remind us of the rage of Herod, and the miserable fate of the children of Bethlehem! We seem to hear their infant cries, and the wailing of their bereaved mothers; “Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted because they are not.” Like Moses, he is compelled to flee into a strange land for protection, and to avoid the sanguinary purpose of a blood-thirsty tyrant, jealous of his power. After all, we see the Jewish Lawgiver rejected of his brethren, his kind interposition despised, and his mission discredited with, “Who made thee a ruler and a judge?” Thus was our condescending Saviour despised and rejected of men: he came to his own, and his own received him not. The high-priest and elders insultingly interrogated him, “With what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?” till at last the whole multitude join in the contemptuous cry, “Crucify him, crucify him! His blood be on us, and on our children!” But though despised of men, like Moses, he is still more highly honoured of God, exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, both *Lord and Christ*.

(4.) In *the whole of his conduct* from the beginning to the end, we observe his typical resemblance to the humble, peaceful, merciful, and faithful Saviour.—What love did he manifest towards his people, when he chose “rather to suffer affliction with them than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season!” (Heb. xi. 24.) when he claims kindred with despised and oppressed slaves, rather than be accounted the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, and probably to wear the crown of Egypt, the most powerful government then existing on the earth! In the same spirit of affectionate regard we see him pleading their cause before a cruel tyrant, overcome at last by the Almighty Power wrought in and by him. Though despised and persecuted by his own people, still he persevered with the most unequalled meekness, the most tender love, and the most ardent zeal. Faithful to his appointment and his undertaking, faithful to the command of God, he accomplishes his work, and



then yields up his life at the Divine command, on the appointed moment; and God himself takes under his peculiar care his sleeping dust.

But here, as always, the antitype infinitely exceeds the type, and in all things our Jesus hath the pre-eminence. What love was his towards his chosen people when, coming to rescue them from worse than an Egyptian bondage, he left the court of heaven, his throne of glory, and the bosom of the Father! No wonder that he disdained the offer of an earthly crown, who knew and participated the glories of the eternal throne. See him entering to plead our cause against him who had led us captive at his will: by death he conquered him that had the power of death, nor ceased till he had led captivity captive. Though despised and persecuted by those who could alone expect redemption from his arm, the indignity he experiences affects not his designs of love: the rebellions of his people cannot turn away the purposes of his grace: he leads and guides them still with all the tenderness of him who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax; who pities their infirmities, and knows they are but dust. Human nature will, however, in some way or other, betray its weakness and depravity; and Moses, the meekest man upon earth, is hurried unawares into the impatience of anger; but the blessed Redeemer is without spot or blemish, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Notwithstanding all the ingratitude, provocations, and backsliding of his rebellious people, still his grace and love remain the same, his purity and meekness unchangeable; like Moses, in the power of faith, for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame, till he had finished the work which was given him to do. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed him, as Moses was faithful in all his house;—Moses, indeed, as a servant; but Christ as a Son over his own house." (Heb. iii. 1–6.) At last, when his work on earth was done, he

surrenders up his life, on the appointed moment, at the command of God, delivered by his determinate counsel and foreknowledge, and commends his spirit to his heavenly Father. His body was still the care of his covenant God and our God, his Father and our Father, till it rose to glory. Blessed be his Name; though his work on earth is finished, his work of mediation is not yet terminated, nor shall be, till every redeemed sinner be brought safe to the heavenly Canaan, the kingdom of his glory. Still he maintains all his characters of love and mercy, all his offices of grace, in which he leaves far behind all his typical representatives in every dispensation of the church, and shines pre-eminent in dignity, authority, and glory.

This will appear by considering,

(5.) Some of the *offices and characters* which Moses sustained towards his people, and which are still and shall be eternally fulfilled in the Redeemer of his spiritual Israel.

The first character in which Moses presented himself to his people was that of *the deliverer*.—He supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not, and therefore refused him as an impostor: still, however, he declines not the task, though arduous, but pleads their cause before their opposers, till he leads them out triumphant; and the children of Israel went up harnessed, in their ranks, out of the land of Egypt. The means by which he delivered them were also typical of the work of Christ, his wonder-working rod, and the blood of the Paschal Lamb.—It is this which gives the Lord Jesus Christ the first title to our attention. He is the Saviour, the Redeemer, the Deliverer of his people; names which indicate his amazing and unchanging love; he redeemed them with his blood, while with his arm he sent the rod of his power out of Sion to perform the wonders of his grace, in reconciling their hearts and subduing their enemies. Thus he redeems to himself a people out of every nation and kindred and tongue, a peculiar people, a people of inheritance: his arm destroys the mighty tyrant that held them in captivity,

and will make them conquerors over all their strongest lusts and inveterate corruptions, as sure as the power of the Lord, by Moses, led out his chosen tribes on the very night when the promise of four hundred years' standing waited its accomplishment. The promise of his everlasting covenant shall never fail: "All that the Father hath given me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out:" he will lose none of them till he raise them up at the last day. (See John. vi. 37—39.)

Thus he obtained a right to be what Moses was, by Divine appointment, to Israel; namely, their *Lord and Lawgiver*.—The Israelites are instructed to remember with thankfulness this character of their deliverer—"Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together." (Deut. xxxiii. 4, 5.) But "the Lord Jehovah is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; he will save us." (Isa. xxxiii. 22.) The same who is our Saviour is our Lawgiver and King; Jesus is exalted as the Prince and the Saviour; and in both these characters his people acknowledge him with delight. They feel that by right of redemption they are not their own: by purchase they are his right, and by grace his willing subjects. His law hath gone forth out of Zion; but not like that of Moses, consisting in carnal rites and ordinances, much less a law of works,—Do this, and live,—and denouncing its curse on every transgression, nor so united with legible precepts, as to be misunderstood and confounded with the covenant of works.

But *the law of faith* directs the penitent sinner to the covenant of grace, the consolatory, complete, and accepted atonement for sin, the gift of righteousness, and the promise of salvation; summing up all its commands in this one: "This is God's command, that we should believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ;" and connecting with it the promise of life, for "whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life;"—"for



Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them; but the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven, (that is, to bring Christ down from above,) or, who shall descend into the deep, (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead): but what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach, that, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 5—10); for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth (ver. 4), and, therefore, it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed. (Rom. iv. 10.) Blessed be the Redeemer of this gracious security, when the Law had for ever closed our way of access to God; let us rely on him who hath fulfilled all the demands of the Law, and hasten by his grace to comply with the command of the Gospel, and rest in faith our souls and all our concerns in the hand of our Redeemer and Saviour.

Hence he opens the way to his *Law of Love*, which is the fulfilment of every law; having taken away the fiery indignation of the holy law, its preceptive parts are now no longer a *consuming fire*, but a *directing light*. When we ask from the principle of Divine love to God—which is the principle implanted by his regenerating Spirit in the heart of all his people, according to the promise of the Gospel covenant—how shall I walk and please God? here we learn his will in its most spiritual and perfect form, and delight in the law of God after the inner man. What wilt thou have me to do? is the language of love in the renewed heart. What shall I render to the Lord for all his mercies? How shall I honour my Saviour? How shall I walk worthy of him who hath called me to glory and virtue? How shall I glorify my heavenly Father? These are questions congenial to the gracious mind: and when the believer sees the law embodied, brought into a living

form, in the example of Christ, or evangelized in the precepts of the Gospel, he consents to it as good, he admires it as holy, he reverences it as just, he aims at conformity and longs for perfection. From the Lord's right hand, by Moses, went a fiery law for them, which made them tremble, but by Jesus a law of love: "yea, he loved the people: all his saints are in his hands; and they sit down at his feet, every one receiving of his words." (See Deut. xxxiii. 2, 3.) This is the sweet motive by which he enforces all his directions;—"If ye love me, keep my commandments;" and to love they are not grievous. This teaches us to esteem all his precepts in all things to be right, and to hate every false way; and to count it the most perfect liberty when keeping all his commandments.

Thus, again, like Moses, our blessed Deliverer becomes the *introducer of a new dispensation*, as the *Prophet and Teacher* of his church.—It was predicted of him, that he should bring forth judgment (regulations, or a system of spiritual ordinances) to the Gentiles; that he should not fail nor be discouraged till he had accomplished it, and that "the isles" should therefore "wait for his law,"—which can apply to nothing but that law of faith which is the glory of the Gospel dispensation to Gentile sinners, or the constitution and ordinance of his New Testament church, in and by which the great truths of the Gospel are set forth and proclaimed. This dispensation is emphatically called "**GRACE AND TRUTH**," in distinction from the law; because of its clear discovery of the sovereign purposes and blessings of the covenant of grace, and the display of Divine truth in the actual fulfilment of the great promise in the person, work, and offering of the Mediator, as a confirmation of the fulfilment of every promise in him. Thus the Apostle has contrasted them in 2 Cor. iii. 7—11, yielding to each its distinct glory, while the Gospel is described by its superior and eminent brightness, as casting all the glory of the law into a shade, no more to be observed through the glory that excelleth. The lessons of our Divine Pro-

phet run through the New-Testament Revelation, and discover him to be the wisdom of God, who is the wisdom of his people, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Let our mind be attentive to his instruction, our understanding submissive to his doctrine, our hearts obedient to his will. From him we may learn all of God, of ourselves, and of eternity, which is necessary or useful for us to know, if we have but the disposition to inquire into, the heart to receive, and the inclination to practise, his Divine instructions.

But this wonderful Deliverer from the tyrannical bondage of sin and satan, the Lawgiver, Lord, and Prophet of his people, is, like his type, *the Leader* of his church through the wilderness of this world to the Canaan of rest above.—So clear is this part of the typical allusion, that the propriety of it is acknowledged by all; and in the state and conduct of the Israelites, together with the care, faithfulness, and love of their leader, has been recognized the clearest representation of the covenant love of the Redeemer, the unchangeableness and faithfulness of his heart, and the wisdom of his hands, in the direction of all their ways, notwithstanding their rebellious provocations and ingratitude. He leads them in the presence of their enemies through seas of trial under their marches, and appoints their journeys through the waste howling wilderness, covering them with his cloud from the burning heat of temptation or persecution, and enlightening them with its light: he sweetens the bitter waters of life, cures all their diseases, and supplies all their wants. The manna with which Moses fed his people, was not the true bread from heaven, but our Jesus is himself “THE BREAD OF LIFE:” if they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, that rock was Christ. His church, like the Israelites, are oftentimes fearful, and repeatedly rebellious; but his wisdom and power are their safe protection from the one, and his kindness and forbearing mercy graciously overlook the other.

Hence he appears most eminently in another character



in which Moses discovered his great love and affection, and his zeal for the interest of his people ; viz. as their *Mediator and Intercessor*. Of this there are *three* peculiar instances upon record ;—when the men were alarmed at the giving of the fiery Law ; when ready to be overcome by the power of Amalek ; and when they had provoked the indignation of God by the abominable idolatry of the golden calf.

First, at the giving of the Law out of the midst of the fire of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice, the men trembled at the glory and greatness of the living God : “ This fire,” say they, “ will consume us : go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak to thee, and we will hear it and do it ; and the Lord said, They have well said all that they have spoken.” (Deut. v. 22—31.)—No man can hear the thunder of the fiery law, except there be a Mediator between God and him, without confusion and destruction. The terrors of Mount Sinai were but emblems of the terror of a sinner’s conscience when the law commands, and binds its obligation there. But if Moses drew me to hear, behold Jesus draws me to obey and satisfy all its demands. He stands between a holy God ; arrayed in the legal terror of his justice, and the trembling perishing sinner, nor suffers the law to speak but from his lips in the sweet commands of love. So terrible was the sight, even to the Jewish mediator, that “ Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.” But its terror fell upon the heart of our Redeemer, till he was sore amazed and very heavy ; till his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death ; till he began to sweat great drops of blood in inward agony ; till he yielded up his soul to its righteous demands, and thus finished his obedience by the death of the cross. Now we proclaim him our Law-fulfiller, and the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Now fear not, trembling conscience, believing in Jesus, for there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus : if thou art delivered from the law, that be-

ing dead in which thou wast held, thou art dead to the law by the body of Christ; it comes to thee only through him, as the law of love; all its terrors, threatenings, and curses, are exhausted in him, they can reach no further, they shall never more be heard by the believing mind: its precepts only direct his way, and guide him to obedience in the newness of the Spirit.—Blessed Jesus! He thus prepared his heart to approach unto God for us, with eternal acceptance; and there, as our great High-Priest, he ever stands to mediate and intercede upon the ground of his complete atonement and righteousness. How infinitely above Moses in the dignity of his person, and the prevalence of his intercession! We have a great High-Priest, Jesus, the Son of God, that is passed into the heavens; yet he can be touched also with the feeling of all our infirmities, because in our nature he has been in all points tempted like as we are, though without sin: let us, therefore, come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. iv. 14—16.)

Secondly, When the Israelites were ready to be overcome by the power of Amalek.—Are we fighting against powerful enemies in the spiritual warfare; not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places? This we do find, and this we shall find, to the end of our Christian course. But where is our strength? Let Moses on the Mount, interceding for Israel when contending with Amalek in the valley below, direct our eye of faith to our Jesus on the Mount Sion above: here let our faith be directed in all our conflicts with the powers of darkness. Blessed Intercessor! there he sits, and loves, and prays, and pleads. But Moses' hands were heavy, and were therefore supported by others; but not so those of our great Intercessor: "He is able to save to the *uttermost* all that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Let us also remember the prevalence of his

intercession. "And as long as Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hands, Amalek prevailed:" and shall not the unintermitted and all-prevalent intercession of our Redeemer before God, secure to his people the constant and eternal victory? Yes, doubtless: though fears and doubts, sins and temptations, cause the believer to groan and lament with "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me!" let faith still adopt the language of triumph, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord;" "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ;" "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that hath loved us." (Compare Rom. vii. 25; viii. 33—39; 1 Cor. xv. 57.)

Thirdly, When they had provoked the indignation of God by the golden calf.—How often have the corrupt idols of our hearts, like the golden calf, provoked the indignation of a jealous God, and justly deserved his vengeance! but still our great Mediator hath come between with his intercession; and still, if any of us sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins. Behold the type: "And Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold; yet now if thou wilt forgive their sin,—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." (Ex. xxxii. 30—32.) How great the ardour of his zeal, and the warmth of his affection towards his rebellious people! He meant, perhaps, to offer himself as an atonement for them, rather than that they should be cut off. But behold our Jesus actually offering up himself an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour. He became the accepted Atonement, and set forth by God to us as the Propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the forgiveness of our sins. In the perform-



ance of this, like Moses, he fasts forty days and forty nights; no doubt occupied through the whole in the great work of redemption, in prayer and supplication for his covenant people, that he might lead them safely to his promised kingdom.

Let the unbelieving Israelites be displeased at his marrying an Ethiopian woman: in this also he was only a type of the Lord our Redeemer and Deliverer taking gentile sinners into union with himself, and introducing them into all the benefits and privileges of his chosen people. Still he continues to fulfil the type, and whosoever cometh unto him he will in no wise cast out. Now of Gentile sinners it is truly said, “Thy Maker is thine Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called.” (Isa. liv. 5.)

These are the principal characters of similarity in which the Redeemer appears like the ancient Deliverer of the Jewish people. Nor are even his mission, character, and offices less authenticated; for,

(6.) We see them *confirmed in the same peculiar and evident manner*: nor can we doubt any more of his Divine authority than that of Moses.—While others were favoured with dream and vision, of Moses it is said, “The Lord spake to him mouth to mouth, and not in dark speeches, and he beheld the similitude of the Lord.” (Num. xii. 6—8.) “And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel.” (Deut. xxxiv. 10—12.) Thus the intimate vision of the Divine glory, reflected from his countenance, astonished the children of Israel.

His mission, also, was confirmed by the most undoubted and convincing miracles, by which the hand of the Lord was evident, and by the most severe judgments on those

who refused his authority; but our Jesus is himself the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. He was in the beginning with God, and was God; and though no man hath seen God at any time, yet the only begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him: he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. How easily, therefore, could he have ascended and shone forth continually in all his Divine glory, as he did for a few moments on the mount of transfiguration, had he not emptied himself on our account, and disrobed himself of his celestial splendour! He spake, therefore, what he had seen with his Father; and the most undoubted miracles declared him to be the Prophet like unto Moses, the promised Messiah, the appointed Saviour of mankind. His resurrection, the greatest miracle of all, confirmed by the most indubitable testimony, established his authority: while the destruction of Jerusalem, its present desolate state, and the present dispersion of the Jewish people, are standing miracles and abiding proofs of his authority and power; that whom they despised and crucified, God hath exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, with all power in his hand to save his people, and destroy his enemies. What was the lustre of the face of Moses to that in which He shines upon his throne! even at the sight of which his beloved disciple fell as it were dead before him, and adored him who liveth, though he was dead, and is alive for evermore. (Rev. i. 17.)

If in these things, or in others, our Jesus bore a resemblance, yet in all he infinitely excels, and in many stands *pre-eminent and alone*.—Moses was but a servant in the house of God; Christ as a Son over his own house. (Heb. iii. 1—3.) Moses was but the adopted son of the Egyptian princess; Christ is the essential Son of God, the eternal Son of the eternal Father. Moses must have another as his priest and his mouth to the people; but grace is poured out upon the lips of Christ our Priest and Teacher, and never man spake like this man. Moses, through the im-

perfection of human nature, sometimes offended, and for one offence was excluded the land of promise ; but such an High-Priest became us, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and eternally separate from sinners. Moses was not able at times to enter into the tent of the congregation, because of the cloud of the glory of the Lord ; our High-Priest has entered into the holiest, and ever liveth before the eternal throne. Moses must die, though he died by the mouth of the Lord \* (see Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6. in the Heb.): and the Lord buried him, and he then ceased to exercise his office ; but not so with Christ. It is true he hath died and was buried ; but this Jesus hath God raised up : his soul was not left in hell, neither did his body see corruption : his mediatorial office, and the exercise of his glorious character towards his church, admitted even then of no interposition. Moses, a dying man, could not complete his design of redemption (in this a type of his dispensation), he could not lead his people over Jordan into the promised Canaan ; but our Jesus never fails : he shall lead through death and the grave, and place his redeemed people in the possession of the heavenly Canaan. Here we behold him as the Mediator of a better covenant, founded upon better promises, promises that have not their full accomplishment on earth, as many of the promises to Israel of old, but relate to and shall be fully accomplished in the heavenly, spiritual, and eternal world in the unchangeable glory of that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

The dispensation which Jesus hath introduced, is a discovery of sovereign grace to needy sinners, resting on his own work, sure in its bestowment, faithful in its continuance, glorious in its effects. Its blessings he himself is called to bestow, and faith is God's instituted mean of entering into the enjoyment, because the mean of discovering our need, beholding his glory, trusting in his salvation, and receiving out of his fulness. Let us, then, beware

\* The Jews, from this peculiar expression, have conceived the idea that the Lord kissed away his soul.



how we neglect his Gospel, and incur a guilt far beyond those who neglected the authority of Moses: if they perished without mercy, what sorer punishment awaits the guilty despiser of the covenant of his grace? (Heb. ii. 1—3; x. 28.) From their example the Apostle has given us a most solemn warning against unbelief, which will most assuredly deprive us of all its blessings and its hopes. (Heb. iii. 18, and iv. 1, 2, &c.) Him shall ye hear in all things, says the Divine command, whatsoever he shall speak unto you. (Acts iii. 22.) As the Saviour, the Teacher, the Leader, and the Guide of his believing people, he comes with a Divine authority; he hath not spoken of himself: a voice from heaven twice proclaimed, “This is my beloved Son; hear ye him” (Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5); and he himself declared, “He that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.”

Let us, then, sit to learn at the feet of Jesus, and submit to whatever he hath spoken. Let us be obedient to his commands, and follow his leading through the wilderness: if it be a wilderness, we may well expect trials by the way; but let not the trial of faith excite our murmuring, and lead us to tempt Christ, as some of them tempted. (1 Cor. x. 1—11.) Though we may not understand his way, well may faith confide in him, that it is the right way to the Canaan above. Let us cheerfully say, *Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.* Blessed be the dear Redeemer for the dispensation of grace and truth which he has introduced: its grace makes it suitable to me, its truth makes it sure to all the seed, and faith gives me the earnest that I shall be found among them. Living by faith, let me rejoice in the security afforded me by the wisdom, love, and care of the Leader of his people: let me trust that care, confide in that wisdom, and be confident of that love; submitting to his direction, and following his leading, till the difficulties and the dangers of the wilderness are exchanged for the heavenly Canaan.

## ESSAY XV.

**Keeper.**

IN situations of perplexity and danger we are inclined to use the wisdom, and thankful for the assistance, of some other who is able to direct and to defend us. When exposed to the assaults of a powerful enemy, we cheerfully place ourselves under the protection of a powerful friend, if such an one presents himself for our aid : conscious insufficiency alone leads us to look for hope where we discover a suitable ability to afford it in any point. Such is the state of man ; his mind, contracted within narrow limits of observation, oftentimes finds itself involved in perplexity and uncertainty : surrounded with the consequences of sin, he feels himself in the midst of a variety of dangers ; while the world, the flesh, and the devil, are enemies which unceasingly watch his path, and against which he finds a necessity of daily contending. His need of a Divine Preserver is more and more evident continually : an increasing knowledge of his situation, and the experience of his own heart, render it but still more manifest, and convinces him how insecure he is when left to himself ; or destitute of an ever-wise, watchful, observant, and powerful friend. Here, then, is one who offers his aid ; who does in fact take all his believing people under his eye, his arm, his care ; an almighty Keeper, for he is the Lord Jehovah ; an all-gracious Keeper, for he is Jehovah Jesus. Happy the man who dwells under his protecting care ! What need he fear, when nothing can hurt him without the permission of that Friend in whom he trusts, whose wisdom is infinite, whose power is al-

mighty, and whose love is unchangeable. Let us fly under his sheltering wing, there trust alone, and trust with confidence, till this blessed Keeper of Israel "hath kept us through faith unto salvation."

As the Lord the Creator, he is also the Preserver of all things; and is, therefore, called "the Saviour of all men," from the exercise of his providential care, and the bestowal of providential bounty; but his preservation of his people is of a more peculiar kind, and, therefore, it is added, "especially of those which believe." As Jehovah, their Keeper, all his attributes and perfections stand engaged for their preservation to grace, their calling, sanctification, and conservation in grace to their eternal salvation. His eye is ever watchful, his care unremitting; his Spirit, with infinite wisdom, almighty power, unchangeable goodness, and everlasting love, stands engaged never to depart from them, till everlasting glory place them beyond the reach of earth and of danger. Delightful view! May we be found among these people thus favoured of the Lord, and believe and trust his grace and faithfulness to the full consummation in his kingdom!

A consideration of a few particulars may tend to discover the glory of the Redeemer, and the security of his people, so as to promote their consolation, and excite their confidence and love.

(1.) He is *the Keeper of their persons*.—The blessed Redeemer himself frequently speaks of his people as those who have been given to him, given to him of the Father, given to him out of the world, that he might redeem and save them, and that it is the will of the Father that he should lose none of them. (Compare John vi. 37—39; x. 29; xvii. 2, 6, 12, 24.) To this engagement he has pledged himself in the eternal counsels of redemption; and he will be faithful to the trust, both towards God and towards them. (John vi. 37; and xl. 44.) In the former and more early dispensation of God to man he frequently appeared as the great Angel of the Covenant, conducting the affairs of his church. And when exalted again to his throne,



after his deep humiliation, the New Testament gives us a most delightful view of his office and actual performance there, as carrying on the course of nature; yea, having all things committed into his hand, with a view to the everlasting salvation of elect sinners. (John xvii. 2.)

He hath, therefore, declared that he will lose none of them, but raise them up at the last day. The very supposition, indeed, of such a disappointment in his design must imply either a want of foresight, and therefore of wisdom, in the plan, or of compassion and love in its progress, or of power in its execution: but who will venture to assert either of these? He hath not laid his plan of redeeming love to be defeated by the malice or stratagem of the enemy, to be perverted by human performance and corruption, or that his everlasting purposes of grace should be changed into indifference by unforeseen discoveries of depravity and opposition in the hearts of his people. No circumstance can ever occur in the opposition of their enemies, nor in the ignorance and obstinacy of the human heart, but what he perceived from everlasting, when he laid the great design, and will honour the mystery of redemption. It was as rebels that he determined to redeem them: he knew they would be such: he well knew the mighty enmity and powerful corruption of the fallen nature of man: he well knew that the grace which obtained pardon must also convince the heart, and render it willing to receive it; and having laid the plan of sovereign grace, he ordered it in all things, and ordained every step to render it secure unto the end. (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.) “This,” says our church, “is a most wholesome doctrine,” and suitable to the comfort of the true believer. (See Art. XVII.) Committed from eternity into the hand of Jesus to redeem and save, in his hand they are now, and shall be for ever. The great Keeper of his Israel preserves them for faith, and then keeps them in the exercise of faith, till he brings them to the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.

The leading hand and protecting power, as well as

the forbearing compassion of their Lord, is oftentimes most wonderful, while continuing in their state of nature and of sin ; till, by the union of his providence and his grace, he hath brought them to himself. It is a most affecting view, and most wonderful to themselves, which they sometimes take of this part of their lives, when they were ignorant of God, or destitute of, and yet careless of, his salvation. His watchful providence hath preserved them for grace : frequently they recount innumerable interpositions of his hand : here and there they have escaped dangers which might have hurried them in their state of enmity and guilt to their justly deserved destruction : at one season the consequences of their sins have been mercifully prevented, or at another they have been mercifully restrained from the exercises of sins into which they were ready to precipitate themselves, and which might have ruined their bodies, and sunk their souls into hell. Thus the Lord has guided them, though they knew him not,—has led them in a way they knew not, and in paths which they had not known, making darkness light before them, and crooked things straight ; refusing to forsake them. He has kept them till the time of his mercy, while he kept his mercies for them ; and by his sovereign goodness he hath, as it were, in a providential manner, “ shut them up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.” (Gal. iii. 23.)

While reviewing with thankfulness this leading of his providence, let the believer recollect that,

(2.) He hath engaged to become *the Keeper of his faith*.—Hence he is called their Life, the constant Spring and Source of its communication, in whom they are blessed with all spiritual blessings ; and in this character the believer is directed to look to him, throughout the whole of his Christian race, both as the motive for his activity, and the source of his strength ; to lay aside every weight, and the sin which does most easily beset him, that he may run with patience the race that is set before him, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of his faith. (Heb. xii. 1.) In this confidence the Psalmist rejoiced : “ My

help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth ; he will never suffer thy feet to be moved : he that keepeth thee will not sleep ; behold he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep : Jehovah is thy Keeper," &c. (Psal. cxxi. 2—5.)

It would afford to the believer a most discouraging prospect, as it is altogether unscriptural, if, left to himself for the preservation of his soul, his security depended upon his own preservation and improvement of the grace already given : with a right sense of his own insufficiency, he could never hold fast his confidence under a constant apprehension of its misimprovement and its loss. And though a fear of caution is the appointed mean of preservation, a fear of dejection discourages every exertion, and is the great artifice of the enemy to secure his subject, and prevent the believer's growth and victory. At such times we more easily become the prey of his temptations, or of our own corruptions. Hence the frequent exhortations to the believer, to " hold fast his confidence in Christ Jesus, which hath great recompense of reward." Our confidence, however, must be grounded only upon his promise ; but he hath ensured to his people his constant and unremitting care : " Fear thou not, for I am with thee ; be not dismayed, for I am thy God : I will strengthen thee ; yea, I will help thee ; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness, &c. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel : I will help thee, saith Jehovah, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." (Isa. xli. 10—15.)

His character of a Shepherd implies the gathering, the guarding, the restoring of his wandering flock. (Jer. xxxi. 10—12.) And what can more tenderly represent his watchful care than gathering the lambs in his arms, carrying them in his bosom, and gently leading those that are with young ? (Isa. xl. 11.) Is his church represented by the emblem of a city ? He appoints " salvation for its walls and bulwarks : " he will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon him, because he trusteth in Jehovah.



“Trust, then, in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.” (Isa. xxvi. 1—4.) Is his church represented under the figure of a vineyard? “I the Lord Jehovah do keep it; I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it; I will keep it night and day.” (Isa. xxvii. 2, 3, 5, 6.) He will not break the bruised reed, or the tenderest flower, but support and nourish it, that it may again revive and flourish. The grace which he hath communicated is the earnest of more; and thus the Apostle considers his calling of his people as the pledge of his continued communications and final preservation: “faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it.” (1 Thess. v. 24.)

The necessity of this is found in the daily experience of every true believer: their own weakness and insufficiency shows them their need of his strength, and magnifies the freeness and all-sufficiency of his grace. When the power of Christ rests upon them, in the exercises of duty, they are frequently reminded, that it would be as easy for them to create a world, as to excite or enliven the exercises of their faith, or the lively ardour of their graces; but when brought humbly to him, to seek it only from his quickening Spirit, their view of his characters, work, and promises, are graciously enlarged, and they feel the powerful enlivening emblems of his grace sanctifying and enlivening their hearts. The reasons of such dispensations are clear: they are intended to humble self, and exalt the Saviour; to divest us of self-confidence, but establish our confidence in Jesus; to direct the eye of faith continually to him; and to secure to him all the glory of his gifts of grace, of their continued exercise, and ultimate perfection, till he hath brought his people to the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.

The Apostle Peter lays it down as a general rule, that he who hath begotten his people to a lively hope of the eternal inheritance will preserve them to it by his own power; kept, says he, by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation; for they are born again of incorruptible

seed, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever; and therefore shall never lose that life to which they are re-born by his Spirit, as they lost their first life in Adam. Why is it, therefore, that he promises to dwell in them, “that his Spirit shall dwell with them, and shall be in them,” but to guard and preserve them from their own corruptions, or the power of their enemies. Is he there to be an idle spectator, to suffer their own natural corruptions, which he well knew, to overcome them, or their enemy to deceive, overpower, and destroy them? It is true, the promise of his word does not secure that they shall never fall, but that they shall be restored again; not that they shall never wander, but that they shall return with repentance and faith; not that they shall never fail, but that they shall not finally be destroyed. And those views, while it prevents their discouragement and despair, are well calculated to excite their prayer and watchfulness. Thus the doctrine of their final perseverance is compatible with the repeated exhortations and warnings of his word, which imply the use of diligence and activity, as the means by which he accomplishes his unchangeable purposes of grace in their salvation: it is by these means alone that he engages to lead them on, and to keep them unto salvation by sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

How dangerous, how uncertain, must be the state of the believer, independent of this! In the consideration of his own corruptions and weakness, his liability to error, his tendency to corruption, the artifice and power of his enemies, he might well yield to discouragement and to despair. “These enemies are too mighty for me: how shall I overcome them?” but Faith replies, “Greater is he that is with us, than he that is in the world.” Faith rests upon his covenant, character, and engagement, and his ability and faithfulness to fulfil them. In the covenant of grace he hath pledged his power and grace in its execution: he gives what he lends, and preserves what he gives: he works in his people both to will and to do of his own good

pleasure, that they may work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. They trust, therefore, in an unfailing Friend and Saviour. "I am persuaded," says the Apostle, "that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him" (2 Tim. i. 12); and if able, what reason can I give why he should not, when no circumstances can arise, either to his people or to their enemy, which were not foreseen and provided for in the covenant, well ordered in all things and sure, when he betrothed his people to himself for ever, in righteousness, judgment, loving-kindness, and mercy? (Hos. ii. 19—23.) But "I am confident (says the Apostle to the Philippians) of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 6; see Rev. iii. 10.) This, indeed, is the new covenant promise: "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear into their hearts that they shall not depart from me; yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good," &c. (Jer. xxxii. 37—41.) While this promise stands upon record the truth must prevail: for as Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, so the same promises will be found true as to all his people; all yea and amen in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us.

Here, then, believer, behold thy security: they shall be well and safely kept, who are kept by the Lord Jesus Christ. If he hath kept them to faith, he will keep them in its exercise to the end; for if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (Rom. v. 10.) This is the promise of their great Preserver, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands." Well might the Apostle exult in the confidence of faith: "Nothing shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 32—39.) The more you discover of your own inability, the deeper your sense of your own unworthiness, look but the more stedfastly to



Jesus; rely upon his power and faithfulness, and he will glorify them in your safety and salvation. “Go around Zion, tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following.” How happy, how secure is the church of God, in the power and presence of her Lord! “For this God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide unto death.” (Psa. xlviii. 12–14.) Lord, increase our faith.

But He who is the Redeemer of the soul will surely not neglect the lesser interests of his people. If he so loved them as to give himself for them to redeem them unto God, how shall he not freely give them all things which his wisdom sees best for them? Hence he is represented also,

(3.) As *the Keeper of all their concerns* in this world of uncertainty and of sin.—It is a consideration the most animating to the faith of the believer, that all power is committed into his hands, that he may give eternal life to his people; that exalted upon the throne in the nature of his brethren, he is the Head over all things for his church. Not only are their individual concerns in his hand, but the whole world; its events, both great and small, are regulated by his wisdom as in subserviency to their God. “His eyes run to and fro throughout all the earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of those that fear him.” His attention to their common concerns is beautifully expressed by the Psalmist;—“Jehovah is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night: the Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; he shall preserve thy soul. Jehovah shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore.” (Psa. cxxi. 5–8.) While he hath the management of all things in providence, it might naturally be expected that the objects of his everlasting love, the redeemed with his blood, the subjects of his spiritual grace, who are partakers of his Spirit, should not be neglected in his government, but obtain his peculiar attention: they might naturally expect that he who clothes the lilies, would much more

clothe them ; that he who feeds the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, would much more provide for his children ; that if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground, nor an hair from the head, without the observation of the great Governor of all, their minutest concerns cannot be beneath his regard any more than the greatest beyond the limit of his infinite mind. With these views they might most reasonably quiet every anxious solicitude, and leave their concerns with him. (Matt. vi. 25—34 ; and x. 29, 39.) But his faithful promises secure to them the particular regards of his providential care : his promises, indeed, are so great and extensive, that, if they were to be literally understood, we must suppose that no affliction or distress could ever rest upon his people. This, however, we know is not the case : this he has declared will not be the case in the present state, and yet his promise ensures them that no evil shall befall them, no plague come nigh their dwelling : they need not be afraid for the terror by night, nor the arrow that flieth by day, nor the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon day ; when a thousand fall at their side, and ten thousand at their right hand, it shall not come nigh them. (See that beautiful charter of Christian privileges in Psal. xci. ; and that delightful series of promises of help under, and deliverance from, all in Psal. xxxiv.)

But though these promises do not secure the deliverance of his people from all that we call evil, they must secure them from what he sees to be evil, and that all which he sends he will turn into a blessing. His wisdom, his knowledge, and his power, guided by his love, are ever employed in the direction of their concerns. His eye is ever upon them, and his ears attentive unto their prayers. Their business, their friends, their circumstances, their estate and persons, yea every event which shall happen to them is under his especial superintendence, and guided by his sovereign pleasure.—What an encouraging view is this in the present state of things ! Faith may well satisfy the believer, and reconcile his mind to all the events of life.



He need not be afraid of evil tidings, when his heart is stedfast trusting in the Lord. If all events are the appointment of his providence, they cannot be wrong under such direction; and if ever they appear dark and inexplicable to us, this must arise from the weakness of our mind, the partial view which we take of his ways, and our consequent ignorance of his present and ultimate design. In the mysterious dispensations of his providence the people of his love may be both poor and afflicted, the redeemed with his blood and the heirs of his kingdom may be tried in the furnace of affliction and harassed by the temptations of the enemy: but, since none of these things can take place without his appointment, it is most reasonable to conclude that there is a necessity for all, and a gracious design in all; while his promise assures them that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose." How highly unreasonable and absurd is it to wish to take the management of the minutest concern out of his hand! Yet this is the language and tendency of our unbelieving fears, and the secret murmuring of dissatisfaction. Are they not, O believer, in the hands of him who loveth thee with an everlasting love; who chose thee for himself; who gave himself for thee, even to the death upon the cross; who is still thy Friend above; who hath called thee by his grace, and hath promised thee his kingdom? Why, then, should you doubt his goodness or his love, any more than his wisdom and his power? Surely he is worthy of our confidence: such views as these call for our faith and quiet dependence: and in thus resting upon him is the happiness of the Christian life. (John xiv. 1, &c.; Phil. iv. 6, 7.)

Let us, then, glorify the Lord Jesus Christ in this delightful character, and in the fulfilment of this covenant office. Let us recollect, that he who is the Keeper of Israel keepeth all the Israel of God by the power of God, that we may glorify him in the only way in which we can glorify him, by giving up our bodies and souls, ourselves and ours, and all our concerns absolutely to his keeping.



Here, then, the believer may cheerfully exult, and say, All my concerns are safe : why then, what then, should I fear ? Nothing can escape his knowledge, nothing can evade his wisdom, nothing can prevent his love, nothing can be beyond his power. I may go in and out, lie down and rise up in safety, for Jesus is my guard. I fight against my sins, corruptions, temptations, and enemies, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of my faith. I triumph in the confidence of faith, that all things are mine, for my sake, and for my salvation, since I have surrendered myself to Christ, since he hath given himself to me, since I am Christ's and Christ is God's. (1 Cor. iii. 21.)

When the good old patriarch Jacob came to the end of his pilgrimage, though his life had been chequered more than any of the rest with scenes of anxiety and affliction ; though he had to recollect his flying from his brother Esau, his treatment in the house and family of Laban, his terror at meeting his brother again, his bereavement of Joseph, and the various trials which had at last brought him into the grave ; yet, upon the review of the whole, he blesses the care of the great Angel of the Covenant, that had led him all his life long, till that day, and redeemed him from all evil, and as his best and dying blessing leaves his children to the same covenant and gracious care. (Gen. xlviii. 16.) Thus shall every believer survey the most intricate paths of providence, and bless the Lord who hath led him in the right way to the city of habitation. He who is their Keeper even unto death and the grave, will also be the Keeper of their bodies, and guard their sleeping dust for the manifestation of his almighty power, and the purposes of his everlasting love. “ Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return,”—was the irrevocable sentence of Divine justice on the entrance of sin ; and though the curse and sting of death are now taken away by the dying Redeemer, yet still it remains as the only passage through to the kingdom of his glory : but he who was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, even after they had descended into the grave, and who still proclaimed himself in that

character, thereby manifested them as whole persons, and therefore their sleeping dust was the object of his care. (See Luke xx. 37, &c.)

What a comforting idea in the gloomy view of death and the grave ! Its dominion shall be only for a season, its triumph shall be short : the grave shall give up the dead that are in it, and then life and immortality shall be brought to light. Of this we have the assurance, the earnest, and the pledge, in the actual resurrection of the Redeemer, the Representative and Forerunner of his people. He who hath raised up Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus : He who hath presented the first fruits shall consummate the harvest. How much more, then, shall his own eye and care respect and preserve his saints ! Let the believer, then, look down into the grave with cheerful confidence, and say, “ Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” Though the prospect be gloomy, He who hath himself passed there and passed through, shall watch over the mansions of the dead ; even there his care shall not cease, nor his eye remit its attention. When the dearest friends can look no more upon the corrupted carcase, when no eye can find it out, mingled with common dust, or scattered with the winds, he knows every particle and will not suffer it to be lost : this mortal shall put on immortality ; this corruptible shall put on incorruption. Let the flesh, therefore, of his people “ rest in hope :” it shall rise to life eternal ; corruption, earth, and worms shall but refine this flesh, till my triumphant spirit comes to put it on afresh. Then shall the creature itself be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. viii. 21—23) ; and the power that preserved it shall call it from the grave, shall change this vile body and fashion it like unto his own glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself. Then will he manifest himself to have been the Keeper of all their treasures, the inheritance of light, the mansions of glory, the kingdom that is above.

Now they are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, but their inheritance is beyond : He who hath obtained it is himself in the possession, in the nature of his brethren, as their Head, Representative, and Forerunner. In his hands it is secure, nor shall their expectation ever fail. Upon these views he himself hath grounded the confidence of their hope, and their consolation in all the troubles of life ;—" If I go to prepare a place for you, I will doubtless come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also." He who keeps the inheritance for them will keep them for it by the power of God ; and

Soon all the chosen seed  
Shall meet around his throne,  
To bless the conduct of his grace,  
And make his glories known.

Blessed be the gracious Keeper of his people, the Keeper of all their concerns : in his hands their blessings are secured : now he brings them into the privileges of his children by adoption and grace ; his eye is upon them, and his care constantly directed to their welfare. But it has not yet appeared what they shall be ; for, when he shall appear, they shall be like him, because they shall see him as he is. (1 John iii. 2.) Their life is now hid with Christ in God ; and when Christ who is their life shall appear, they also shall appear with him in glory. (Col. iii. 3, 4.)

Realize, then, O believer, the gracious prospect that opens to thee beyond, and its infallible security in the hands of the Lord thy Keeper. He who can perform the wonders which he hath spoken, and supply all we want, must indeed be the Lord Jehovah, Omnipresent and Omnipotent : but, blessed be his Name, such he is, and therefore able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, and able to keep all we commit to him against the great day. Thus secure, O believer, look forward, and realize the blessings and the glories which await thee. Let this faith be the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen ; then, though the outward



man perish, the inward man shall be renewed day by day. Then shalt thou view all thy light afflictions, which are but for a moment, as working out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Let the world be prosperous or adverse, thy hopes and expectations are above, and there they stand secure and unchangeable.

With such prospects before thee, the events of this changing world need not alarm thy fear, nor excite thy sorrow: though the concerns of the earth be dark and gloomy, they shall certainly issue in his glory and the prosperity of the church, since he has the direction of them all for the good of his church. His wisdom, power, and love shall accomplish his designs without a failure, and bring every redeemed sinner to the kingdom of eternal peace and glory. Soon at last thou shalt have done with all below, and change this scene of trial for the kingdom which he hath purchased. In the mean while, his eye is upon thee, and upon all thy concerns, to bring thee safely there: “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. His Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the Fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy, then, art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord (Jehovah), the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thine excellency? And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.” (Deut. iii. 27—29.)

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